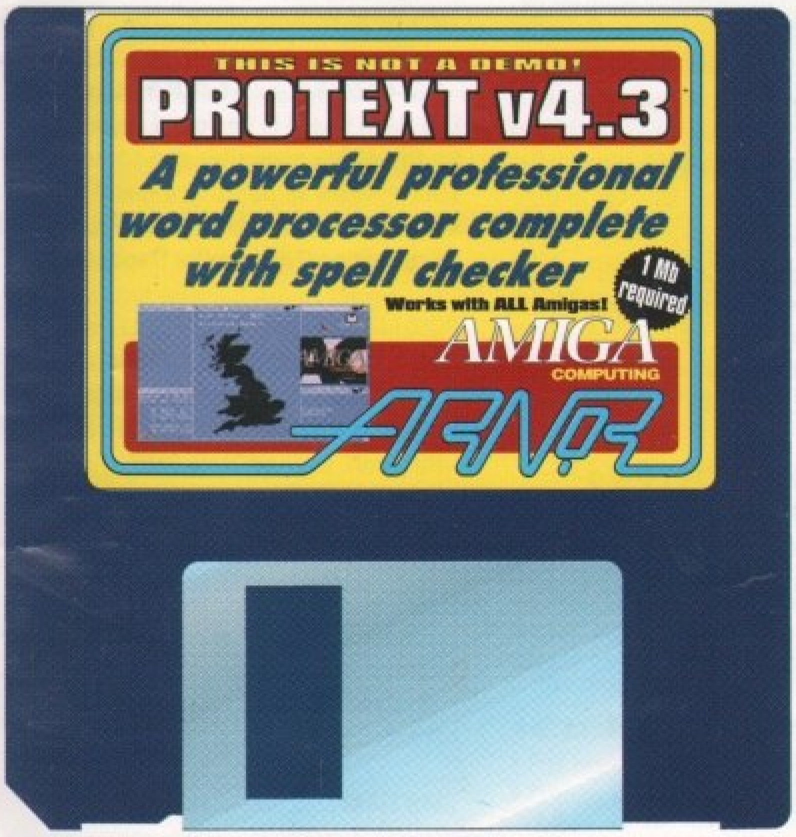
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- Floppy drive roundup

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Amiga Format July 1992

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- Thru'port for printer
- Award winning editing, image manipulation & scanning software

Power Scanner v3.0 ....£115
Power Scanner Colour £239

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- 600 DPI Colour flatbed scanner
- 24-bit colour
- A4 reading area
- Software included

Epson GT-6000 ....£799

Epson GT-8000

- 800 DPI colour flatbed scanner
- 24-bit colour
- A4 reading area
- Software included
- Amazing scan quality

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If you consider your scanner system to be inferior to the Power Scanner, we will happily upgrade your software and interface. (Power Scanner is compatible with most scanning heads)
v3.0 Upgrade (inc. interface)........£49.95
v3.0 Software upgrade for PowerScanner users (send SAE) £15
The Amiga can only display 16 greyscales

Floppy Drives

"This drive contains more gadgets than Batman's utility belt"
Amiga Computing Feb1992

PC880B Power Drive



- Award winning drive manufactured by Power Computing
- Super slim design
- Anti-click (Cures that annoying click)
- Virus blocker (Prevents viruses)
- Built-in backup hardware

PC880B with Blitz Amiga £60
PC880B with Blitz & XCopy £75
PC880B (Cyclone compatible)* £65
PC880B in black case £65
*This drive is only available to registered owners of XCopy Professional. You must provide proof of purchase of XCopy Professional

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- High density floppy disk drive

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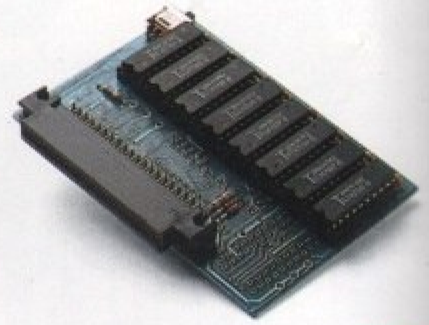
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- Ultra slim memory cards
- 1MB & 2MB
- For A600/A1200

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- Fully compatible with Fatter Agnus

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(Your Amiga needs to be opened, this may effect your warranty)

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- Works with 1MB of Chip RAM

(512K RAM must be 4 chip type or not exceeding 9cm in length)
(Your Amiga needs to be opened, this may effect your Warranty)

1MB with thru'port £45

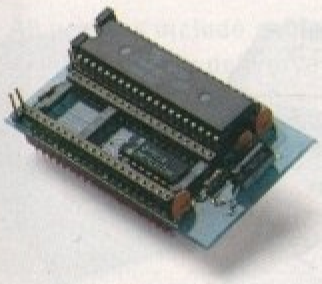
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- 512K RAM expansion with clock & free software (A500+ compatible)

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512K RAM (16 chip) with clock £24
512K RAM (16 chip) without clock £19

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* Kick-off requires the lid to be removed from the Amiga. This may invalidate your warranty.

ROM Share	£17.95
ROM Share inc. kickstart v2.04	£55
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ROM Share for A600	£29

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2.04 kit with ROM sharer	£99

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- Easy to understand manual

Video Backup System	£59.95

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GVP A530 Turbo HD



- 40MHz 68030EC accelerator
- Optional 68882 maths co-processor
- Up to 8MB 32-bit FASTRAM on-board
- Award winning

42QMB HD 0MB RAM	£549
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68882 Upgrade kit	£224

GVP Series 2 HD

- Up to 8MB FASTRAM on board

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40QMB 4MB	£440	80QMB 4MB	£499
40QMB 8MB	£509	80QMB 8MB	£549

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- Fits inside your Amiga 500
- Comes complete, just plug-in and go

Novia 40I 40MB HD	£279
Novia 80I 80MB HD	£349

ICD Flicker Fixer

Flicker Free Video 2

- Stop that annoying flicker
- Fits internally in the A500
- Multi-sync monitor required

Flicker Free Video 2	£199
NEC 4FG Multi-sync monitor	£549

Chips

4MB x 8SIMM	£90
1MB x 8SIMM	£25
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1MB x 1DRAM	£3.95
1 x 4 ZIP	£14.95
1 x 4 DIP	£19.95
A3000 Static column RAM	£19.95
SIMM 32 x 1MB-60	£65
SIM 32 x 4MB-60	£243

(These chips cover most memory & hard drives i.e. GVP, Supra, Commodore)

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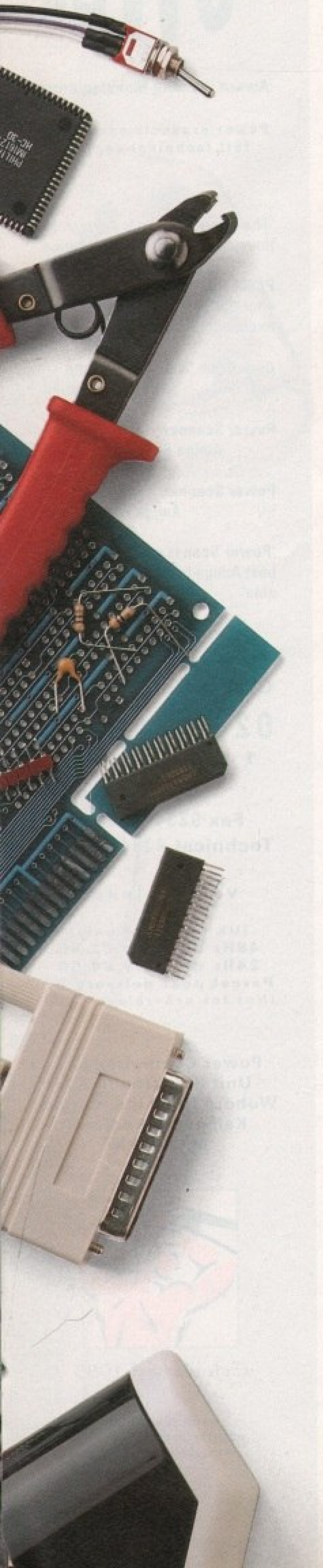
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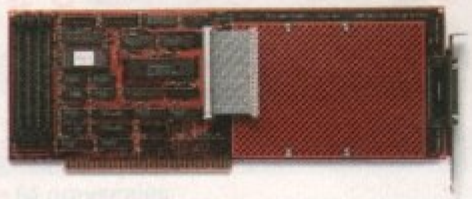
A2000 Hard Cards

GVP Series 2 HD

- Up to 8Mb SIMM RAM on-board
- Supports external SCSI devices
- 14MHz SCSI controller

Bare	£129		
40QMB 0MB	£249	80QMB 0MB	£349
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40QMB 4MB	£349	80QMB 4MB	£449
40QMB 8MB	£429	80QMB 8MB	£539

Nexus Hard Card



- Up to 8MB RAM on-board

Bare	£129		
40QMB 0MB	£249	80QMB 0MB	£349
40QMB 2MB	£299	80QMB 2MB	£399
40QMB 4MB	£349	80QMB 4MB	£449
40QMB 8MB	£429	80QMB 8MB	£539

Bare SCSI Hard Drive

40 Quantum .. £179 80 Quantum .. £229

(Suitable for GVP G-Force, GVP HD or Nexus HC)
Other sizes of HD available, please call

RAM Expansion

- Aries A1500 / A2000 RAM

2MB	£129	6MB	£209
4MB	£169	8MB	£249

Macintosh Emulator

"This really is the best emulator we've seen for the Amiga. It behaves just as if you really were using a Mac"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

AMax-II Plus

- Amiga 1500 and above
- Runs Mac software
- Runs System 7
- Full support for all SCSI Mac peripherals and the ability to read Mac disks in your drives
- 68020/68030 compatible
- AppleTalk emulation
- Can use Amiga ECS
- Easy to install

AMax-II Plus £229
(Mac ROM chips required)

24-Bit Colour

OpalVision

- 24-bit graphic card
- 16.8 million colours available
- Operates in all standard Amiga resolutions
- VLSI Microcode graphics co-processor
- Double buffered 24-bit and 15-bit animation is available in all resolutions
- 'Palatte-mapped' design updates screen colours in real-time. Fade pictures in and out and change their palettes
- Equipped with 1.5MB of display RAM
- Auto-config for NTSC or PAL
- Available for all Amigas

Software included

OpalPaint

- 24-bit painting and image processing

OpalPresents

- Presentation program
- Control OpalVision images, Amiga graphics and live video
- Includes fades, effects etc.
- Many more features

King of Karate

- 24-bit computer game
- Exciting karate competition
- Demonstrates OpalVision capabilities

OpalVision £699

More information available
OpalVision roaster chip available soon

Monitors

"For a monitor of this quality, the CM8833 is worth every penny"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

"The 4FG is an absolutely smashing monitor that beats every competitor"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

Philips CM8833 Mk2

- With cable
- Available with Lotus Turbo Challenge 2
- On-site maintenance

CM8833 Mk2 .... £199

NEC Multisync 4FG

- For use with Flicker Fixers
- Very high quality
- Built-in degausser
- 15" Screen

NEC Multisync 4FG £549

Optical Hard Drive



- Manufactured by Power Computing
- 128MB on one optical disk
- Read and write optical disks
- 40ms running speed
- Built-in power supply
- High power cooling fan
- 25-way and 50-way SCSI ports
- Thru'port built-in
- SCSI ID switch
- Compatible with major SCSI controllers

128MB optical drive (Internal) £729
128MB optical drive (External) £999
128MB 3.5" optical disk .... £39.95 each
SCSI controller card
for A1500 / A2000 .... £129
(Compatible with Amiga, PC, and Mac. A SCSI controller is required on the Amiga and PC)

Floptical Disk Drive

- Stores 20MB on one 3½" disk
- Cost effective mass storage unit
- Can be used as a 1.44MB floppy with Amiga DOS and AMAX
- AMAX compatible with DMI Mac driver
- Packs an entire back-up onto one floppy
- Additional disks available
- Internal version for A1500/2000/3000
- External version for A500
- SCSI Interface required

Internal A2000 kit £289
Internal A3000 kit £289
External A500 kit £389
A1500 .... £599

Accelerator

GVP G-Force

- 68030 accelerator board
- 68882 Maths co-processor
- DMA SCSI controller on-board
- 68000 fall-back mode
- Only CPU slot is used
- Internal and external SCSI connector
- Converts to hard card with Hard Drive mount kit
- 32-bit RAM as standard

25MHz 1MB RAM £529
40MHz 4MB RAM £759
50MHz 4MB RAM £1249
Hard drive mount kit £35

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Tel 0234 843388

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All printers include cables
and next day delivery

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LC200 colour	£199
LC24-200 mono	£239
LC24-200 colour	£289

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Laser

EPL-4000	£639
EPL-4300	£799
EPL-8100	£1349

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SQ-870	£509
SQ-1170 (132 column printer)	£629

Dot Matrix

LQ-570	£289
LQ-1070 (132 column printer)	£449



LQ-100	£209
LX100	£189

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Supra Fax Modem Plus	£129
Supra Fax Modem v32Bis	£275
Supra Modem 2400 (External)	£75
Supra Modem 2400 ZIplus (Internal)	£134
Supra 9600	£210

Miscellaneous

Power Mouse	£15
Optical Mouse	£29.95
Replacement optical mouse mat	£9.95
10 Maxell disks, optical mouse, Zipstick	£45
Maxell multi-colour disks (10)	£9.95
Floppy disks bulk	£POA
Aviator 1 joystick	£35
Intruder 1 joystick	£29.99
Maverick 1 joystick	£15.99
Python 1 joystick	£9.99
Apache 1 joystick	£7.99



Colour PowerScan

The Power Computing colour hand-held scanner for the Amiga is now available. This scanner offers the following features

- 4096 colours
- 50-400 DPI
- 4 Scanning modes
- Text
- Greyscale
- Colour halftone
- Colour

The Amiga interface plugs into an A1500/A2000/A3000/A4000 expansion slot with a separate version which connects to the expansion connector of the A500/A500+. The A500 version has a through-port which is compatible with all Amiga 500 expansion peripherals.

The software supplied with this scanner is the new PowerScan Professional 3, which also supports the greyscale scanner and will be available as an upgrade to existing users of PowerScan for £15.

Colour PowerScan v3.0 features

- Real-time 'True-feel' scan option in colour halftone mode
- Images are stored internally as 12-bit graphics, not HAM. This means that no quality is lost due to the Amiga only being able to display HAM images in 4096 colours
- Images are displayed as HAM pictures
- HAM images may be loaded from disk and edited using PowerScan 3
- Image size that can be handled is limited only by the amount of memory available
- Memory does not have to be chip memory as in many art packages
- Images can be saved in various file formats
- View whole image function
- Scale/rotate/skew image or clipboard by any amount
- Crop image
- Clean up, lighten or darken image
- Variable zoom mode
- Draw freehand, lines, circles, boxes and polygons in various fill patterns, brush sizes, paste modes, or with the clip board image
- Clipboards may be scanned directly, or any shape can be cut from the main image
- The software is compatible with all Amigas
- Supports Workbench 2 and ECS screen modes

Colour PowerScan now available

New v3.0 Scan software

PowerScan Colour v3.0	£239
PowerScan Greyscale v3.0	£115
PowerScan v3.0 software upgrade	£15

The Amiga can only display 16 greyscales

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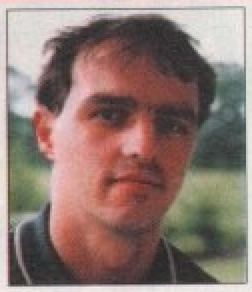
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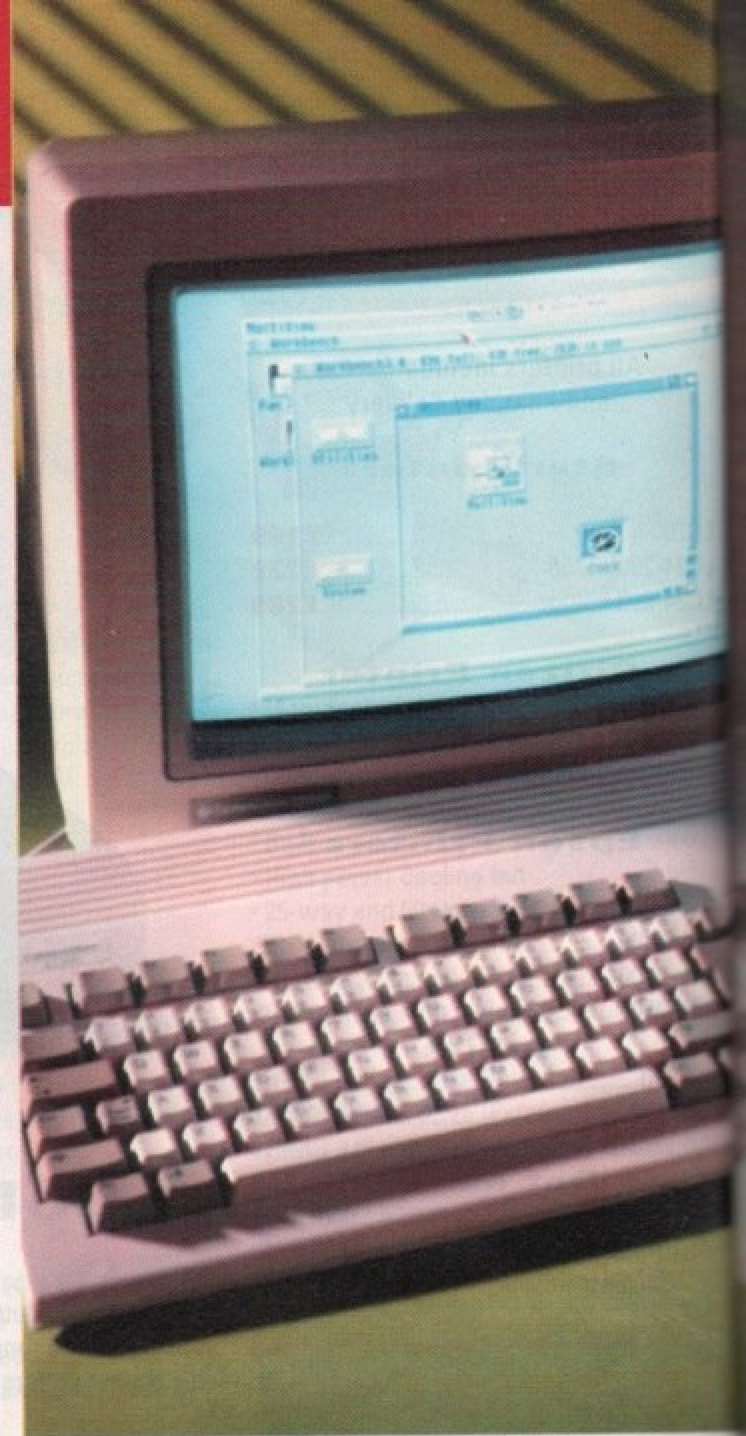
Welcome to another issue of Britain's best and only complete Amiga magazine. This is our biggest month for some time, and as it's our Christmas special we've packed in as many reviews, views, and opinions as possible.

Probably the biggest feature you'll all be looking at is our Protext v4.3 free disk. Unlike some other magazines, we've held back from charging an extra £1 on a regular basis for software which might be of limited broad appeal, and stuck instead to offering the best possible deals. Superbase Personal was one such example - probably the most useable and friendly Amiga database - and vProtext 4.3 is another. This powerful wordprocessor, though ageing, can still outperform most other Amiga packages in terms of raw wordprocessing power, a fact which our tutorials this month and next will attempt to show.

For those who wish to upgrade to the latest version of the software or purchase a manual to enable advanced application, we have a hard-to-beat offer, so you can't go wrong.

Add to this the most feature-packed magazine around, with more serious editorial pages than any of our competitors, a games section which buzzes with a life of its own, and coverage of all new developments (see our authoratative A1200 review), and you need buy only one magazine - Amiga Computing.

Stevie



WHO'S WHO

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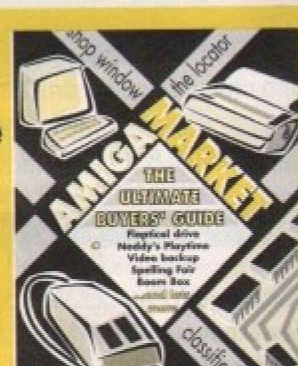
For four years *Amiga Computing* has been the leading magazine for Amiga enthusiasts. As a key member of the Europress magazine group, *Amiga Computing* promises to inform, educate and entertain its readers each month with the most dedicated coverage of the Amiga available.

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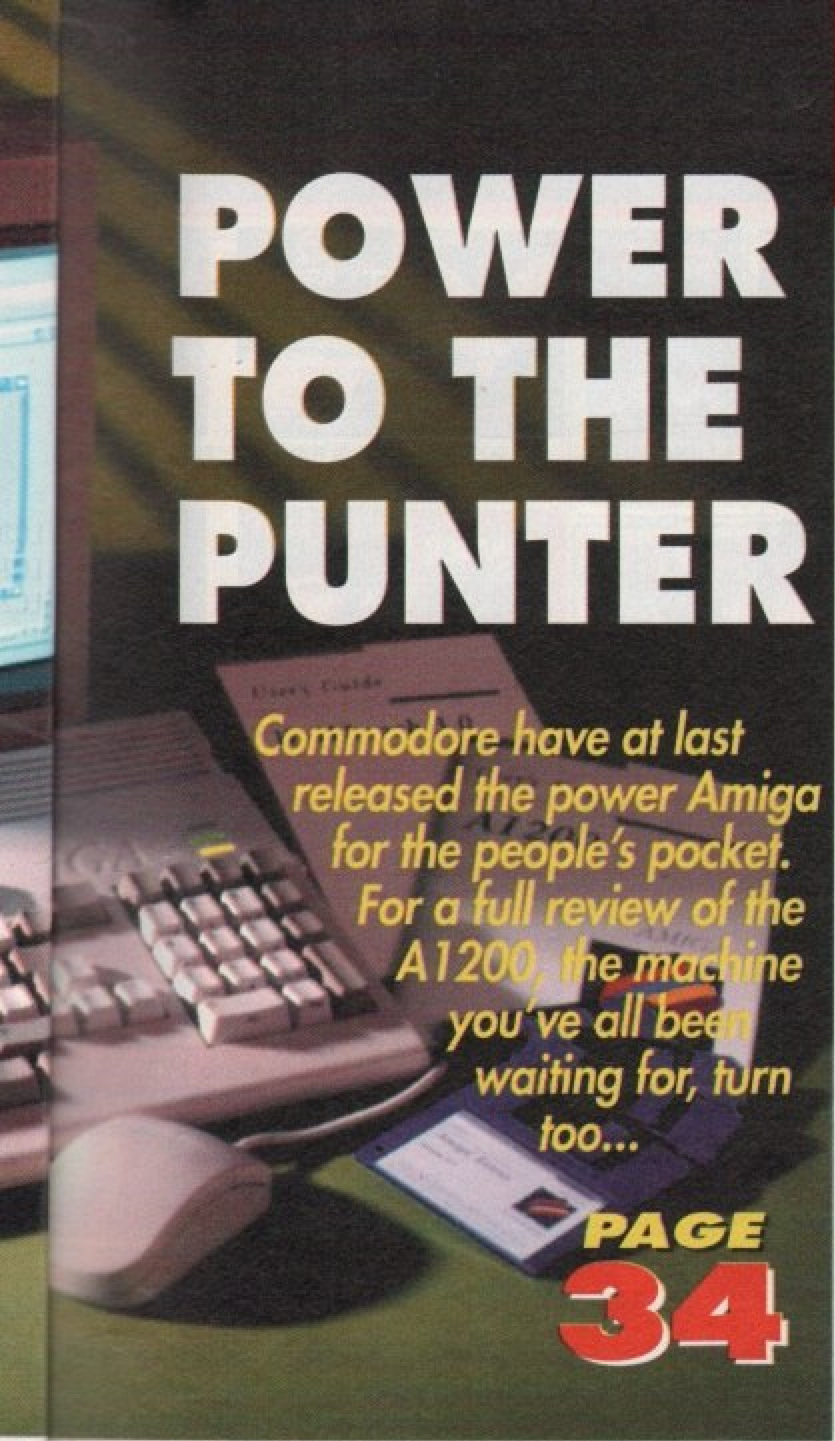
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Turn to page 185

amiga almanac

Nine pages of applications for the Amiga

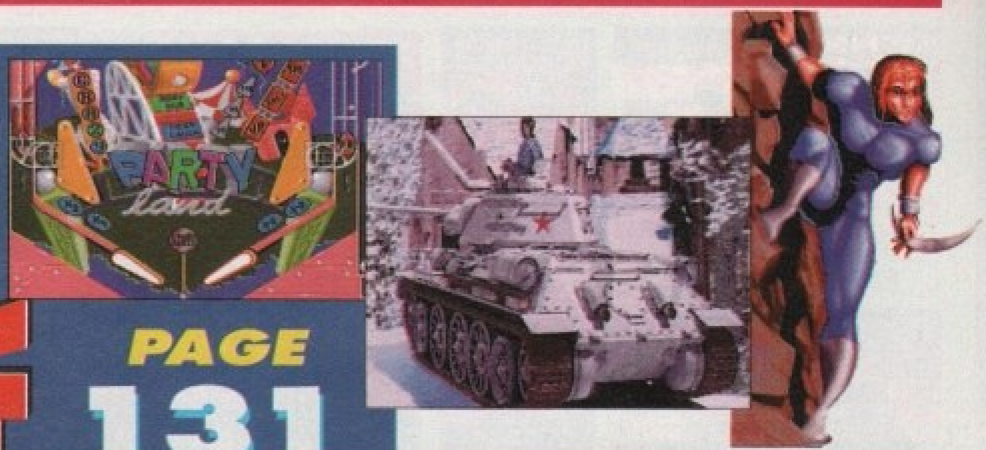
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POWER TO THE PUNTER

Commodore have at last released the power Amiga for the people's pocket. For a full review of the A1200, the machine you've all been waiting for, turn too...

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GAMER

PAGE 131

The best of the latest games, plus previews, news and playing guides

Don't miss our fantastic offers for subscribers

see page 54 now!

SPECIALS







THE COVERDISKS

Page 26



FREE! PROTEXT v4.3. Powerful wordprocessor worth £80!

Turn to page 26 for details of our fantastic freebie, Protext v4.3. This superb wordprocessor is free, and we begin a three-month tutorial on how to get the best from it in this issue. You will also find a not-to-be-missed offer on Protext v5.5 upgrades and 4.3 manuals.

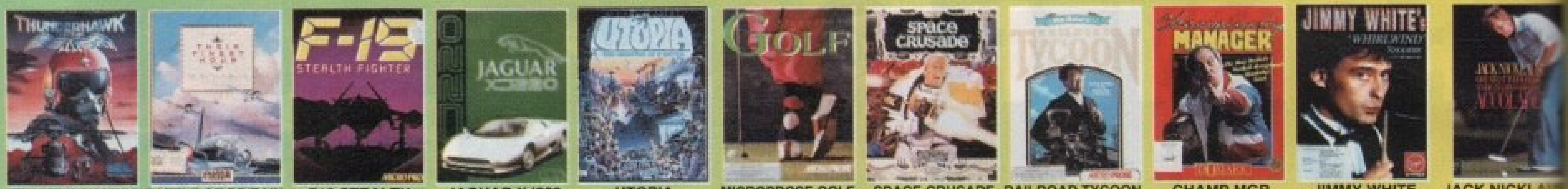
Save money, or spend as little as possible in an unrepeatable Yuletide giveaway - it's your choice. See page 31 now!

***PLUS:** our usual CoverDisk, including Fighting Warriors, a brilliant Kung-Fu beat-`em-up, Batman, a superb remix of the classic original, and four emminently useable utilities: ShowSTD, Grammar, Flying Toasters, and AmiDex.*

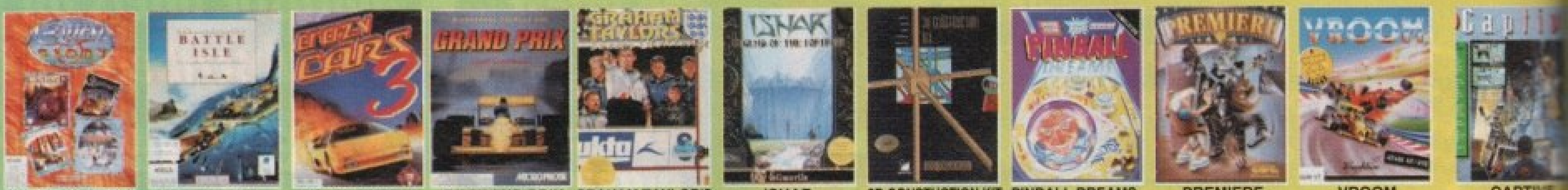
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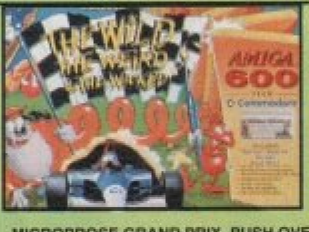
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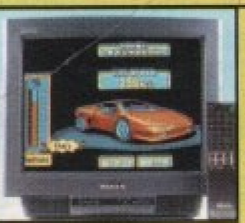


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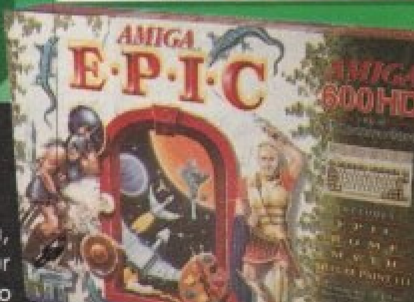
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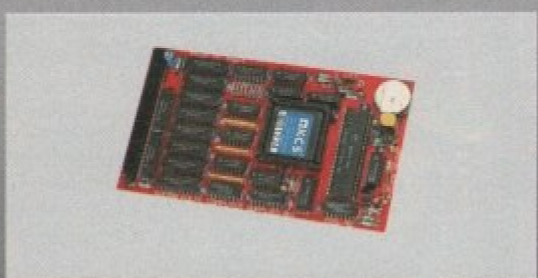
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AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE AMIGA COMPUTING

by John Butters

Industry enthuses over £399 A1200

THE A1200 met a warm welcome from the industry at its London launch recently, with leading games houses pledging their immediate support for the £399.99 computer.

Most of its key specifications had already been revealed in last month's *Amiga Computing*, but Commodore managed to shock almost everyone with their ultra-aggressive pricing.

We can now confirm that the 68020-based machine will be supplied with 2Mb of memory and Workbench 3, but it does not have a high density floppy drive or SCSI II interface.

Around 60 per cent of the 3,000 titles available for the Amiga are claimed to be compatible, and recent releases are much more likely to load successfully.

At the computer's launch several firms unveiled software they had been developing behind closed doors for several months, and many promised A1200 games before Christmas.

Among the companies working on software are Electronic Arts who will release Deluxe Paint IV AA, and top games houses Gremlin, Microprose, Ocean, System 3 and Psygnosis.

Many of the first releases will be improvements on current Amiga or PC games, but most firms said they expected to release A1200-specific products around next spring.

No software is bundled with the computer and although the A1200 has an IDE interface, the manufacturer has decided against selling a hard drive version until at least next spring.

And in an exclusive interview with *Amiga Computing*, Commodore boss Kelly Sumner said that a price rise for the A1200 was a "real possibility".

"Most international companies – including Commodore – deal in dollars," he said. "At the moment manufacturers are being hit by a weak pound, and the situation is likely to get worse."

But he concluded: "The Amiga brand has been of the forefront of computer games technology since it was launched in 1987. The Amiga 1200 will keep it there."



Amiga 1200 – welcomed with open arms

A600 – the C64 of the 90s

FOLLOWING the launch of the A1200 with its state of the art graphics, Commodore promise that the A600 has a safe future as "the C64 of the 90s – an entry-level home computer".

The firm have ruled out immediate price cuts, but because of limited A1200 availability has featured the A600 at the centre of a £3.5 million advertising campaign running until Christmas.

Targeting children and their parents, adverts will appear in several consumer magazines, national newspapers and television. Most feature the line "Have you got what it takes?"

Said Commodore's national marketing manager Dawn Levack: "Our research shows that youngsters see the Amiga as an aspirational machine with superb software.

"But it also shows that it's mostly parents, of course, who do the buying, and they want a little more for their money. The Amiga satisfies both."

The software industry also says it will continue supporting the 16-bit Amigas, with many firms now planning to release two versions of their games.



National TV ads for the A600

Sumner denies console claim

AN INDUSTRY insider's claims that Commodore are secretly working on an Amiga-based games console have been vehemently denied by the firm's UK boss, Kelly Sumner.

The source told *Amiga Computing* that the £200 console would be based on a 68020 processor running at 16MHz and feature the new AA chipset.

A plug-in option would enable a motherboard to be added, effectively building the console into a full Amiga, with a keyboard, serial and printer ports for less than £500.

"We've said for a long time that we can sell as many Amigas as we can get, so why bastardise our price point to go into that market?" asked Sumner.



Sumner: Amiga console a "dream machine"

He said that PCMCA costs would need to come down before such a machine could become feasible and said the Amiga console was a "dream machine".

It was also claimed that future versions of the operating system will support Motorola's Digital Signal Processor, PostScript, networking and printer and file sharing.

Amiga wears a Red Nose

COMMODORE have joined forces with Ocean Software to support next year's Comic Relief charity, when the first Red Nose game, SleepWalker, will be included in a special edition A1200 bundle.

Keeping the computer's normal £399.99 price tag, only 25,000 of the packs will be made.

Commodore and the distribution chain will give up part of their profits and it is hoped the packs will raise £250,000 for the charity.

Existing Amiga owners will also be able to play the game. Due for released as a standalone product at the end of January, it is expected to earn Comic Relief an extra £500,000.

And Ocean are also organising a national Red Nose Challenge, where games players will be able to compete against each other to raise extra money for the charity.

"We are delighted to involve Ocean Software in the work of Comic Relief," said the firm's boss David Ward.

"They have identified the games medium as a perfect way to reach a huge audience. We will do all we can to ensure that everyone who enjoys games will take part in Red Nose Day."

Commodore managing director Kelly Sumner said he is pleased to help because the charity benefits British children – his target market.

Europress to support show

THE publishers of *Amiga Computing*, Europress, have confirmed that they will be sponsoring the next International Computer Show, due to be held in February.

Organised by Westminster Exhibitions, the three-day event is promised to be the launch pad for several new Amiga products from leading software and hardware firms.

One of the show's main features will be on-going demonstrations which are to take place within five main sections – entertainment, education, the home office, music and consoles.

"Following our successful sponsorship of the last International Computer Show, *Amiga Computing* is pleased to announce its support of the forthcoming February event," said Europress Enterprise boss Ian Bloomfield.

"We look forward to meeting our readers and being able to talk to them on a one-to-one basis about anything related to their Amiga."

Running between February 19 and 21 at Wembley Exhibition Centre, the organiser recommends that to avoid disappointment visitors should obtain advance tickets.

The discounted tickets can be ordered by telephoning 0726 68020.

High storage from Power

BEDFORD-based peripheral manufacturer Power Computing (0234 843388) are set to release a floppy disk drive that will give Amiga users almost twice as much storage capacity.

The firm's high density drive will connect to any Amiga and enable suitable disks to be formatted to give 1.44Mb of storage. Price: £99.

Comfortable play

DELTA Ray is the name of a new joystick due soon from Logic 3 (081-902 2211). With four Fire buttons, two-speed autofire, six heavy duty microswitches and a "comfort" grip, it will cost £13.99.



Games players find comfort with Delta Ray

Monitors tune in to TV

VIDEO specialist Roctec Electronics have announced a "picture-in-picture" display for computer and home video applications.

PIP View is designed to display two video sources on the same television or monitor, with the main picture accompanied with a scaled-down image from another source.

The device also has a built-in tuner which turns any composite monitor into a television, and its linear stereo capability ensures Nicam video quality is maintained.

Full remote control is available for most functions including tuning, volume and programming. PIP View will cost around £150.

486 emulation arrives



Monitor Master gets Amiga output on VGA screens

HOT on the heels of their Golden Gate 386 PC emulator, Vortex have unveiled a 486-based version of the card which they claim to be up to 2.4 times faster than a 25MHz 386SX processor.

Golden Gate 486SLC runs from a 25MHz 80486 SLC PC/AT emulator and can be fitted in A2000s and A3000s.

It is supplied with 2Mb of memory and this can be increased to 16Mb with standard 1Mb or 4Mb SIMMs.

The board has an IDE hard disk interface which can support a PC hard drive containing one AmigaDOS partition. A maths co-processor can also be added to the card.

Monitor Master is an optional extra which allows the connection of an EGA/VGA graphics cards and Amiga video output on a VGA monitor.

Golden Gate 486SLC costs £699 and Monitor Master is £79 from Silica Systems (081-309 1111). Germany-based Vortex can be telephoned on 010 49 7131 5972 0.

24-pins for under £200

PRINTER giant Seikosha (0753 685873) have signalled the start of a new price war by slashing the cost of their SL-90 dot matrix printer, to make it Britain's first sub-£200 24-pin machine.

The firm aim the £199 price tag to be the spearhead of a Christmas drive to make 24-pin printing affordable within the home and small businesses.

Seikosha's Gareth Cornish said: "By dropping the price of the SL-90 we have significantly boosted the price/performance level of the printer."

At the time of going to press other manufacturers had not adjusted the cost of their machines, although industry pundits considered the move imminent.

Games packed with Amigas

SOME of the year's biggest games are being given away free with every Amiga sold at Silica Systems (081-309 1111).

The four title pack is worth £127 and contains Zool, Pinball Dreams and Striker, as well as wordprocessor TransWrite. It is supplied with A500s, A600s, A1200s and CDTV systems.

Studio sounds at home

POWER Computing (0234 843388) have been appointed distributor of Adept Development's Home Music Kit, a package billed as a simple to use, all-in-one sound kit.

Contained in the package are Digital Studio III, a program to transform the Amiga into a sound studio and Real Time Sound Processor II for adding more than 32 special effects.

Once completed sounds can be converted into digital signals using Stereo Sound Digitiser. Price: £49.

ADI meets juniors

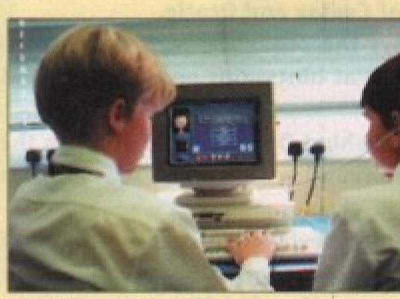
YOUNGSTERS are now able to meet the space character ADI in the latest software from education specialists Europress Software (0625 859333).

ADI has already become popular with older children as a pre-GCSE learning aid and now ADI Junior has been launched to cater for the needs of younger children.

ADI is used to teach counting and reading, with bright and colourful graphics, sound and a series of games to keep the child amused.

Help keys are available for problem areas and each program contains three difficulty levels to suit the user's ability.

"We plan to extend the ADI programs even further next year, with the possibility of science releases, and even more of languages," said Europress Software's Alexa Czechowski.



Now ADI meets juniors

She added that next year the Macclesfield-based firm will extend their educational range further with Fun School 5.

Versions of ADI Counting and ADI Reading are available for 4 to 5-year-olds and 6 to 7-year-olds and cost £25.99 each.

Harry greets hospital kids

HARRY is a new project aimed at putting Amigas into the children's departments of British hospitals to explain treatments and acclimatise youngsters to unfamiliar surroundings.

Standing for Helping And Responsible Reassuring Youngsters, the scheme enables hospitals to buy an A600 and a kit containing more than £200 worth of software for £265.

Harry is the brainchild of Buckinghamshire father and son Mike and Chris Blackwell, who aim to get the project accepted by and used in thousands of sites.

It grew from work that 15-year-old Chris was doing for Wycombe Hospital. Using his computer he produced cartoons to be given to children, each explaining a subject like blood test simply.

"In hospitals anything that can break the monotony for children has to be good news," says Mike. "Children see the Amiga as a friend and its acceptance by young people is staggering."

Linda Weiss, a professional hospital play specialist, agreed with the benefits of the Harry project. "It's a superb project because it works for children," she said.

"Making children understand what's happening to them is very important because hospitals are an alien environment."

Equipment is supplied by Commodore, Electronic Arts, Canon, Psygnosis, Codemasters and Cheetah.

Upgrade for DaataScan Professional

USERS of Pandaal International's DaataScan Professional hand scanner can now upgrade their software to obtain many extra features.

Among the additions are a dual screen layout, conversion of scanned dithered images into 16 true greyscales and colour control using 16 colours from a palette of 4,096.

There is also a brightness control, two levels of zoom with full greyscale editing, freehand drawing and an add text option with a selection of fonts.

Compatible with Workbench 3, existing users can upgrade to v3 of the software for £20. Pandaal International can be telephoned on 071-328 1717.



Improved software for Daatascan Professional

Consumer electronics show for Britain

PLANS for a massive consumer electronics show to be held in London next September have been unveiled by News International, publisher of many leading newspapers.

Many computer hardware firms including Commodore have already pledged their support for Live '93, and the organiser expects up to 175,000 people at the four-day event.

"The UK has needed this pre-Christmas chance for consumers to get an early hands-on opportunity with the latest products," said Bob Denton, the exhibition manager. "Manufacturers will be on hand to give demonstrations and advice from their stands and via our interactive seminars."

The event will be held at Olympia's Great Hall and Olympia 2.

Bright new pad gives disabled control

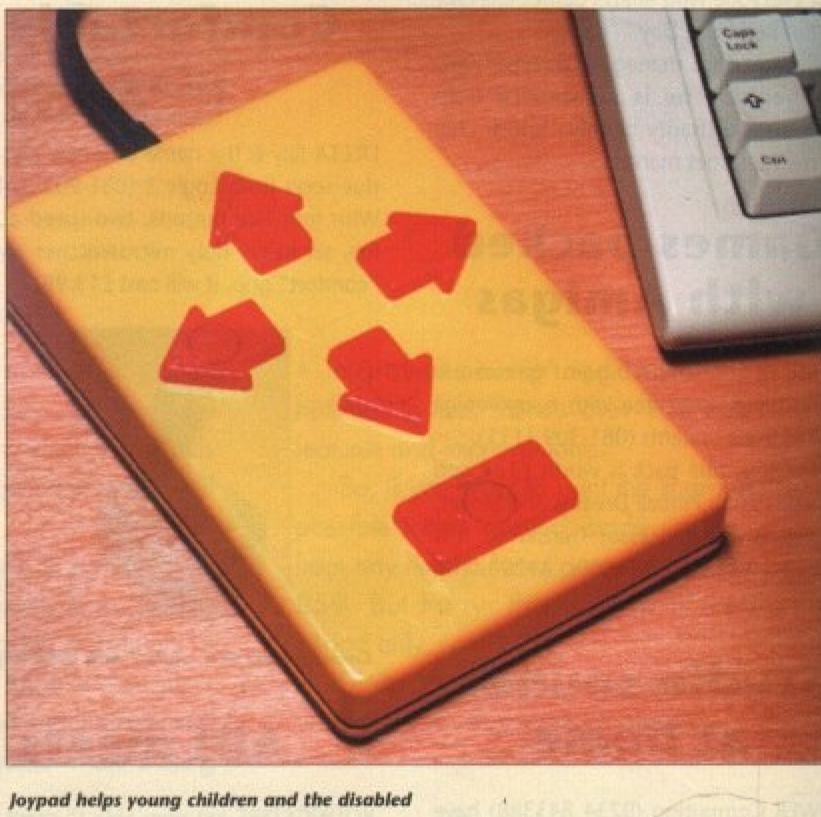
JOYPAD is the name of a new device for very young children and people who cannot cope with keyboards or conventional mice and joysticks.

Four large red arrow keys and an "action" key are grouped on a bright yellow pad. It plugs into the Amiga's joystick port and can be used in the hand, on a tabletop or floor.

"The Joypad is suitable for many special needs users with minor disability," claimed a spokesperson for manufacturer Holdfast Computing.

"With its steel chassis, no need for a flat work surface and no exposed removable ball, the Joypad promises to be a robust mouse replacement."

Price: £25 from Holdfast Computing (0454 411126).



Joypad helps young children and the disabled

Amiga has a Bad Influence!

DURING the closing credits of Bad Influence! – Britain's newest and most successful computer games show – a special magazine is transmitted for viewers with a video recorder.

Even though the transmission lasts for only 20 seconds, Data Blast contains 50 pages of text and pictures that are far superior to the chunky graphics of Ceefax and Oracle.

The viewer plays the sequence back and uses the player's pause or jog controls to stop at hints, tips and cheats for all popular computers and consoles.

The technology behind Data Blast could pave the way for the instant magazine of tomorrow, with one of its major advantages being its price.

All that Yorkshire Television needed to get Data Blast up and running was a £299 A600 and Europress Software's versatile Easy Amos programming language costing £34.99.

The producers say the pair were chosen because it was felt their viewers would prefer to see something they would be able to create in the same way on their own computer.

A special feature revealing the secrets behind Data Blast is published in the latest issue of *Bad Influence!* magazine, on sale now at your local newsagent.

Fast and friendly Genlock

AMERICAN peripheral giant Great Valley Products have unveiled their latest Amiga product, a genlock called simply G-Lock.

Billed as the easiest, most flexible, most capable, high performance genlock that can be bought for the Amiga, it is claimed to boast many time-saving features.

It includes "push-button" control panels and offers full transcoder operation with compositeY/C, and RGB/YUV outputs, ESC/AA keyer modes control.Interrested? Call Silica Systems on 081-309 1111.

Bad Influence! makes noise

A COVER-mounted cassette containing rare tracks from top bands is being given away free with the first issue of *Bad Influence!* magazine, the new publication for games players.

On side A of the tape is a preview remix of Right Said Fred's Love for all Seasons, taken from their Up album. This remix will never be available in Britain.

Side B features the latest track from Brooklyn. Aptly named Bad Influence. It is taking the US dance floors by storm.

And running in conjunction with the Bad Influence! television show, readers are offered the chance to win a recording session with Brooklyn, who will create a song with the winner.

***Bad Influence!* is available from all good newsagents or by sending a cheque/postal order for £2.95 to Bad Influence! Competition, Europress Direct, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port L65 3EA.**



Exclusive tunes with Bad Influence

Kuma advise on top games

KUMA Computers have announced details of a new book they will be publishing for Amiga users in the next few weeks.

Aimed at games players, *Amiga Five 0* contains tips and reviews on 50 top Amiga titles including Zool, Sensible Soccer and Sim City.

Written by Ashley Cotter-Cairns, the book also has advice on joysticks, controllers and getting the best out of the Amiga as a games machine. Price: £9.95.

CD titles hit the century

COMMODORE have announced the availability of more than 100 CD-based titles for the Amiga, and say they expect CD to emerge as the storage media of the future.

Among the collection are hits such as Lemmings, Sim City, Sensible Soccer, and CDTV Sports Football, and others under development include Zool, James Pond and Archer McClean's Pool.

The format also boasts a broad range of education, reference and music discs.

"Amiga CDTV's first 'century' simply proves how far the machine has come," said Commodore boss Kelly Sumner.

Extra fonts for bubblejet

BJ10/130 Fonts is an Amiga package used for creating, editing and downloading "soft fonts" for use with Canon's bubblejet range of printers.

The fonts act the same as the printer's own fonts and because the font is dumped to the printer's memory and forgotten about there is no need for a control program.

Compatible with packages such as Scribble, Transwrite and Protext, the program costs £10 from Jeff Tullin, Ursa Software, 11 Highwell Gardens, Felling, Tyne & Wear NE10 0NB.

Amiga tours the garden

GARDENERS and botanists are targeted for Plants for all Seasons, a ten-disk guide covering all aspects of the kingdom of plants.

It has up to 20 pages of fields and linked disk files hold information on each plant, with the first page showing the plant's position within the kingdom.

Further pages deal with special subjects and have several multimedia buttons to allow access to object, sound, picture, text and video files.

Users are encouraged to contribute information and files for inclusion in updates, and are promised royalties in return for their work.

Developer Applied Research Kernel can be contacted on 0983 551496.

Visual editing for videos

AN automatic video editing system just launched by Milan-based DeskTop Video (010 39 2 4980 566) is claimed to be ideal for inexperienced editors because it manages sequences visually.

Frame Talk allows videos to be edited in a similar way to film editing, where sequences can be viewed, cut and remounted at will.

The package also features utility and control instruments, including a database and special system designed to synchronise the video and music beat.

It requires an A2000 or A3000 and can control up to four machines such as VDRs, switchers, mixers or DVE. UK availability and pricing were unknown at the time of going to press.

DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING WE DON'T?

Although *Amiga Computing* has scores of contacts in the Amiga world we need you. If you have some hot news ring John Butters on the news desk now on 0625 878888 or fax to 0625 879966. All information supplied will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

DIARY DATES

4 to 5 December 1992
Gamesmaster Live
Organiser: EMAP
(0234 212988)
Venue: NEC, Birmingham
A big games show with support from Channel 4's TV programme.

19 to 21 February 1993
7th International Computer Show
Organiser: Westminster Exhibitions
(081-549 3444)
Venue: Wembley, London
An *Amiga Computing*-sponsored all formats event.

4 to 6 April 1993
European Computer Trade Show
Organiser: Blenheim
(081-742 2828)
Venue: Business Design Centre, London
New software and hardware is previewed to the industry. No public admission.

23 to 25 April 1993
Midi Music Show
Organiser: Westminster Exhibitions
(081-549 3444)
Venue: Wembley Exhibition Centre
Catch up with the latest Midi products.

OVERSEAS

7 to 10 January 1993
Consumer Electronics Show
Organiser: (010 1 202 4578700)
Venue: Las Vegas, USA
Support from Commodore and leading games houses.

24 to 31 March 1993
CeBit
Organiser: Deutsche Messe
(010 49 511890)
Venue: Hanover, Germany
A massive electronics show which has been used for the launch of many new products including the A600.

• If your company is organising a show relevant to the Amiga and it's not listed, let us know so we can include the information in the diary.

A fair discount

AMIGA enthusiasts interested in attending the touring All Formats Computer Fair can now get 50 vouchers to entitle adults to £1 off the normal admission price.

The vouchers detail the venues and dates for all events up to the end of April, and can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Bruce Everiss, Maple Lead, Stretton-on-Fosse, Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 9QX.

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- Reduces/Eliminates Banding

WORTH **£14.10** (inc VAT - see text)

or for £13.10 (£1 off RRP) to purchase (ASC 4572)

BUDGET 9 PIN PRINTER



144 CPS 80 COLUMN

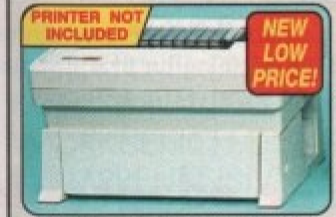
- Citizen 120D+ - 9 pin
- 144cps Draft, 30cps NLQ
- 4K Printer Buffer + 2 Fonts
- Parallel or Serial Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 240 x 240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Pull tractor & bottom feed
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP	£199
SILICA STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£224
SAVING:	£109
SILICA PRICE:	£115

£115 +VAT= £135.13 ref: PRI 2120

The Citizen 120D printer comes supplied with a parallel interface as standard. If you require a serial interface instead, please state ref: PRI 2125 when placing your order with Silica.

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For Swift 9, 24, 24e, 200, 240 and 224 Printers

- Helps keep pace with Citizen Printer's powerful paper handling
- Robust & Durable Construction
- Saves space and protects continuous stationery from dust and damage
- Compatible with bottom and rear feed operation

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9 PIN PRINTERS



192 CPS 80 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 9 - 9 pin - 80 column
- 192cps Draft, 48cps NLQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 240 x 240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- FREE Colour Kit
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP	£239
COLOUR KIT	£38
STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£302
SAVING:	£143
SILICA PRICE:	£159

£159 +VAT= £186.83 ref: PRI 2209



192 CPS 136 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 9x - 9 pin - 136 column
- 192cps Draft, 48cps NLQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 240 x 240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- Colour Option Available
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP	£329
STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£354
SAVING:	£155
SILICA PRICE:	£199

£199 +VAT= £233.83 ref: PRI 2309

24 PIN PRINTER



NEW! SWIFT 2 SERIES

SWIFT 240M MONO PRINTER (COLOUR OPTION AVAILABLE)

SWIFT 240C COLOUR PRINTER

300 CPS 80 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 240/240C - 24 pin - 80 column
- 300cps SD (15cpi), 240 cps Draft, 80cps LQ
- 8K Printer Buffer - 40K maximum
- 9 LQ Fonts + 2 Scalable Fonts (8-40pts)
- 1 x Font Cartridge Slot - for plug in 'Style' Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360 x 360 dpi
- Epson, IBM, NEC P20 & CEL Emulations
- Quarter Printing Facility
- Auto Set Facility - Bi-directional I/F, Auto Emulation Detection
- Command Vue IV Front Control Panel
- Ultra Quiet Mode - 44.5 dB(A)
- Colour Printing Standard - Swift 240c, Colour Printing Optional - Swift 240
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

SWIFT 240 MONO

RRP	£329
STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£354
SAVING:	£115
SILICA PRICE:	£239

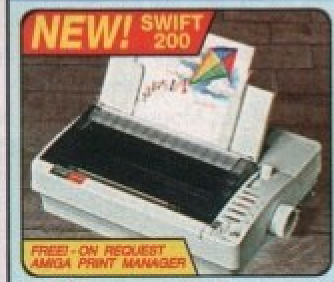
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SWIFT 240C COLOUR

RRP	£369
STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£394
SAVING:	£135
SILICA PRICE:	£259

£259 +VAT= £304.33 ref: PRI 2571

24 PIN PRINTERS



270 CPS 80 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 200 - 24 pin - 80 column
- 270cps SD (15cpi), 216 cps Draft, 72cps LQ
- 8K Printer Buffer - 40K maximum
- Parallel Interface
- 6 LQ Fonts
- Graphics Resolution: 360 x 360 dpi
- Epson, IBM, & NEC P20 Emulations
- Quarter Printing and Auto Set Facility
- Ultra Quiet Mode - 44.5 dB(A)
- Colour Option Available
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP	£269
SILICA STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£294
SAVING:	£115
SILICA PRICE:	£179

£179 +VAT= £210.33 ref: PRI 2490



192 CPS 136 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 24x - 24 pin - 136 column
- 192cps Draft, 64cps NLQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 4 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360 x 360dpi
- Epson, IBM and NEC P6 Emulation
- Colour Option Available
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

RRP	£489
SILICA STARTER KIT	£25
TOTAL VALUE:	£514
SAVING:	£215
SILICA PRICE:	£299

£299 +VAT= £351.33 ref: PRI 2574

INKJET PRINTER



360 CPS 80 COLUMN

- Citizen Projet - inkjet - 80 column
- 360cps Draft, 120cps NLQ
- 50 Nozzle Head - Whisper Quiet 47dB(A)
- 8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Optional HP Compatible Font cards
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 300x300dpi
- HP Deskjet plus emulation

RRP	£496
TOTAL VALUE:	£496
SAVING:	£151
SILICA PRICE:	£345

£345 +VAT= £405.38 ref: PRI 2090

NOTEBOOK PRINTER



64 CPS 80 COLUMN

- Citizen PN48 Notebook Printer
- Non-impact Printing on Plain Paper
- 53cps LQ - 4K Buffer + 2 Fonts
- Rear and Bottom Paper Loading
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 360 x 360dpi
- Epson, IBM, NEC P6 & Citizen Emulation
- Powered From Mains, Battery or Car Adaptor

RRP	£325
TOTAL VALUE:	£325
SAVING:	£126
SILICA PRICE:	£199

£199 +VAT= £233.83 ref: PRI 2100

ACCESSORIES

SHEET FEEDERS

PRA 1200	1200	£71.38
PRA 1215	124D/224/Swift 9/24	£88.70
PRA 1228	124D/224/Swift 9/24	£42.00

SERIAL INTERFACES

PRA 1189	1200+	£56.45
PRA 1209	Swift 9/9x/124D/224	£32.25
PRA 1709	Swift 24/24x/24e	£26.38

32K MEMORY EXPN

PRA 1753	124D/224/Swift 24	£13.10

PRINTER STAND

PRA 1242	124D/224/Swift 9/24	£22.33
PRA 1274	Swift 9X/24X	£30.86

ORIGINAL RIBBONS

RIB 3520	120D/Swift 9 Black	£2.91
RIB 3949	Swift 9x Black	£7.15
RIB 3924	124D/Swift 24 Black	£4.70
RIB 3936	224/Swift 9/24 Colour	£15.63
RIB 3248	PN48 Single Strike	£3.61
RIB 3348	PN48 Multi Strike	£3.61

COLOUR KITS

PRA 1236	224/Swift 9/24e/200/240	£35.25
PRA 1240	Swift 9x/24x	£35.25

PN48 ACCESSORIES

PRA 1148	PN48 Battery	£46.70
PRA 1155	PN48 Cable Extn	£29.37
PRA 1162	PN48 Car Adaptor	£16.80

Accessories prices inc. VAT & delivery

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Before you decide when to buy your new printer, we suggest you think very carefully about WHERE you buy it. Consider what it will be like a few months after you have made your purchase, when you may require additional peripherals and accessories, or help and advice with your new purchase. And, will the company you buy from contact you with details of new products? At Silica Systems, we ensure that you will have nothing to worry about. We have been established for almost 14 years and, with our unrivalled experience and expertise, we can now claim to meet our customers' requirements with an understanding which is second to none. But don't just take our word for it. Complete and return the coupon now for our latest FREE literature and begin to experience the "Silica Systems Service".

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LONDON SHOP: Opening Hours: Mon-Sat 9.30am-6.00pm	52 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 0BA	No Late Night Opening	Tel: 071-580 4000 Fax No: 071-323 4737
LONDON SHOP: Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30am-7.00pm (Sat close 6.30pm)	Selfridges (1st Floor), Oxford Street, London, W1A 1AB	Late Night: Thursday - 8pm	Tel: 071-629 1234 Extension: 3914
SIDCUP SHOP: Opening Hours: Mon-Sat 9.00am-5.30pm	1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Rd, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4DX	Late Night: Friday - 7pm	Tel: 081-302 8811 Fax No: 081-309 0017
ESSEX SHOP: Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm (Sat 9.00am-6.00pm)	Keddies (2nd Floor), High Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 1LA	No Late Night Opening	Tel: 0702 462426 Fax No: 0702 462363

To: Silica Systems, AMCOM-0193-55, 1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Rd, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4DX

PLEASE SEND A BROCHURE ON THE CITIZEN RANGE

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: .... Initials: .... Surname: ....

Company Name (if applicable): ....

Address: ....

....

.... Postcode: ....

Tel (Home): .... Tel (Work): ....

Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 55L

E&OE - Advertised prices and specifications may change - Please return the coupon for the latest information.



Denny Atkin reports on the latest developments from the USA

As winter nears and the temperatures drop below freezing, more and more American Amiga users decide to sit by the warmth of a glowing monitor rather than brave the ice and snow outside.

Some of this time is usually spent playing the hot new games released for the Christmas season, but it appears that Santa may not be as co-operative this year.

More and more American game software companies are going PC-only, citing relatively low sales of Amiga software compared to MS-DOS games.

Sierra, Dynamix, Accolade, Spectrum Holobyte, Broderbund, and Activision all used to be big supporters of the Amiga – now they either don't do Amiga versions of their games, or they release them only for the healthier European market.

Almost all of the US game companies which do support the Amiga are simply importing games from the UK nowadays. Amiga users are hoping that the A1200 will revitalise the US games market, but with Commodore marketing the Amiga almost exclusively as a "multimedia workstation", that doesn't seem likely.

So it looks like while you'll see plenty of neat hardware and productivity software from this side of the pond, the supply of games is slowly drying up.

Hooray for HollyWare

One company which is still producing games in the US is Hollyware Entertainment. Their new game, Lords of Time, traps astronaut Major Tom in a medieval land of zombies and magic (someone tell David Bowie and Peter Schilling – I think they've been looking for this guy).

You have to guide Major Tom through the land known only as The Realm in search of a human king named Tanor, who may have the key to returning Tom home.

If you ever played MicroIllusions' classic Faery Tale Adventure, you'll be right at home in this game. In fact, HollyWare now market MicroIllusions' old products.

It uses the same overhead, slightly isometric view, and you are once again walking around a giant land in search of spells. This game has more options, though, as you'll run across weapons, learn spells, and converse with other characters as you make your trek.

Also the land is magnitudes larger. Hollyware makes a big deal out the fact that the cities, objects, and dungeons in the land move each time you start the game, allowing infinite re-playability.

However, after you send 35 or so hours solving this the first time, I doubt you'll want to dive in again.

The game itself is entertaining, although I'll have to admit that I'd rather have spent more time solving puzzles and exploring than killing the annoying spiders that kept following me across the countryside.

It's not ground-breaking by any means, but there's enough here to keep the casual player occupied. It works fine on the A1200, although it's a bit touchy on the joystick on fast machines.

Contact HollyWare Entertainment at 13464 Washington Blvd., Marina Del Rey, CA 90291; (310) 822-9200.

Be adaptable

Have you ever wanted to use a Microsoft "Dove bar" mouse on your Amiga? Or are you looking for an analogue joystick to gain that extra degree of control in your flight simulations?

DigiPrint has the solution. The DP Bus Mouse Interface and DP Analog Interface adapt IBM bus mice and joysticks respectively to work on the Amiga.

These aren't your typical "built-in-a-garage" adaptors with screw-together connectors, either. These high-quality devices have factory-manufactured moulded ends that won't come apart if you jerk the cable accidentally.

The DP Bus Mouse Interface is elegant in its simplicity – just plug in an IBM Bus Mouse or trackball and then plug the interface into your Amiga.

If you want to use a top-quality PC mouse, or save some money and buy a bargain-basement replacement mouse, this interface is for you.

The DP Analog Interface is a must-have for flight simulator aficionados. Unlike simple analogue adaptors, which just rearrange the wires and add a capacitor to increase the joystick's range, the DP interface has a switch that adjusts the joystick's precision.

In the past, an interface that worked well with F-19 might not have offered much control with Birds of Prey, for instance. Flipping the three-position switch allows the DP interface to work well with all Amiga flight simulators.

These interfaces retail for only $15 each, and DigiPrint says they should be available through UK computer shops thanks to the their agreements with major distributors.

DigiPrint can be reached at PO Box 13016, Richmond, VA 23225; (804) 560-1769.

Paying off credit cards

You've got 2Mb in your cute little A600, and you thought that would be plenty. After all, you're just going to use it to play games and pop out the occasional letter to Mom, right?

Well, since you've discovered the joy of multitasking you've probably found that 2Mb just isn't enough, especially on an A600HD.

NewMedia, a California company, has come out with two PCMCIA RAM cards designed specifically for the Amiga. Available in 2Mb and 4Mb sizes, these cards use a custom dynamic RAM scheme called PSRAM instead of more expensive static RAM (SRAM).

This allows them to fit more memory on the card (4Mb versus the 2Mb maximum of current SRAM technology) at a lower price.

You can't use the PSRAM cards as storage devices like you can SRAM cards – they're usable as system RAM only – but not many people are going to use a $250 card to replace a $1 floppy anyway.

I tested NewMedia's 4Mb card in both the A600 and A1200. You simply plug the card in and turn on the machine – no messing around with PrepCard necessary.

The card works well with both machines, but is a better bet for use on the A600. Unlike DRAM, PSRAM needs to be refreshed periodically, and when you combine the time necessary for this refresh and the overhead of only running on a 16-bit bus, adding memory in the PCMCIA slot can slow your A1200 by over 30 percent.

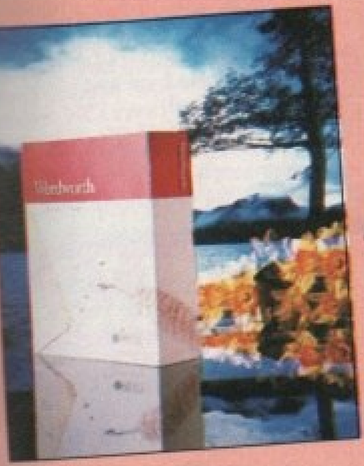
The A1200's trapdoor local-bus DMA slot is the best place to put memory expansions on that machine, since it's a full 32-bit slot.

On the A600, though, the NewMedia card didn't affect the speed at all. A 6Mb A600 certainly makes for a powerful little transportable machine.

NewMedia's president told me that the company plan to release a whole line of PCMCIA expansion cards for the A600 and A1200, including SCSI and serial port adaptors. NewMedia can be contacted at (714) 453-0550.



PCMCIA memory cards are finally begining to make an appearance



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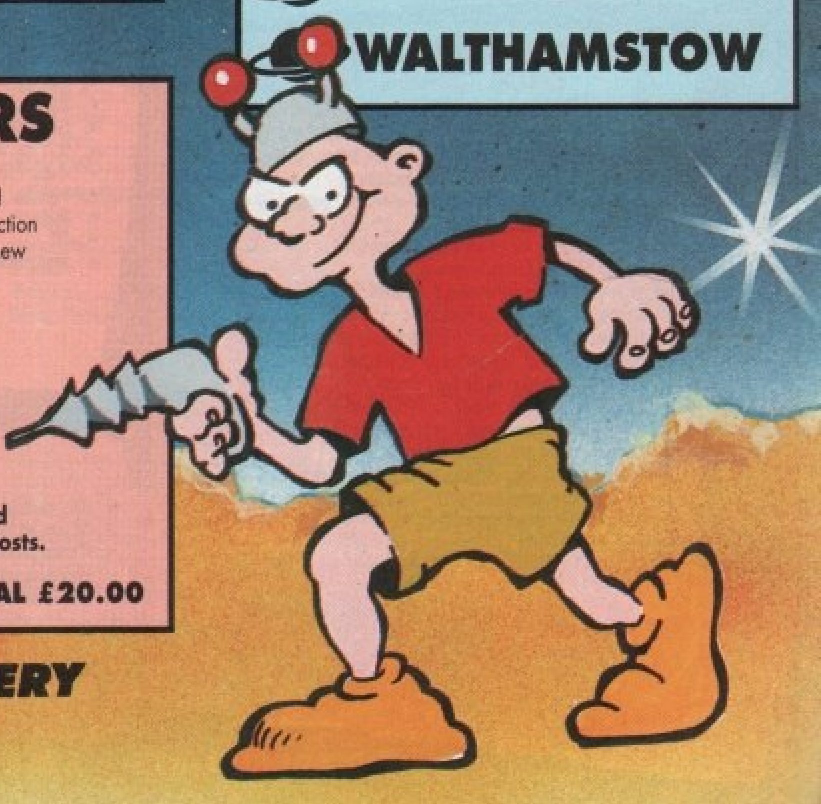
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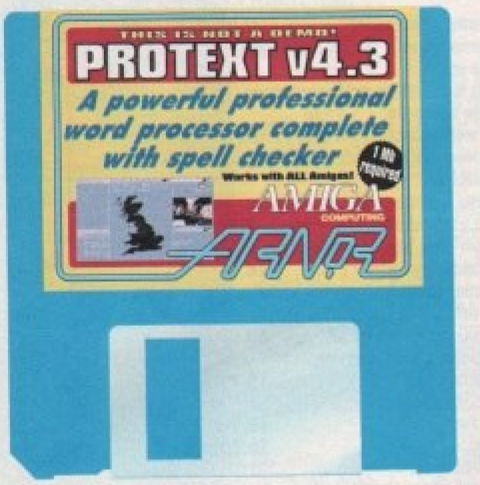
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the DISK



Protext v4.3

Join the professional word crunchers with *Amiga Computing* and Arnor's best ever free gift

Since the first Amiga wordprocessors appeared, one name has risen head and shoulders above the crowd as a standard for power, speed, and professional flexibility.

Protext has been an icon in Amiga productivity circles for years, the target at which every other software house has aimed, and though some have surpassed it in terms of wysiwyg displays and user interfaces, few can match Protext for raw power and sheer number of advanced wordprocessing features.

Now every *Amiga Computing* reader can enjoy the benefits of this superb program, thanks to our best giveaway ever and Arnor's not-to-be-missed Protext 5.5 upgrade offer. The disk on the front cover of this magazine contains a fully functioning Protext 4.3 complete with spell checker and a selection of popular printer drivers, so boot up now.

Absolute beginners should work their way through the following user's guide, but experienced wordsmiths will probably want to just dive straight in.

Editing screen

Once Protext has loaded you are presented with the normal editing screen, containing no text. You may find a horizontal line containing the Protext copyright message and version number about two-thirds of the way down the screen.

This shows that you are in Protext's command mode which need not be used when menus are being used. If this line is visible, press Esc to remove it. At the top of the screen you will see the two Status lines and beneath them, the ruler line. The status lines contain details of the document being edited and also of the settings for various Protext features.

The ruler line always displays the ruler which is currently in use in the document. You should see a flashing cursor on the left of the line beneath the ruler line. This is the editing cursor and always indicates where the next character will be entered, or where the next action will take place.

Depress and hold down the right mouse button and the Menu Bar will appear at the top of the screen in place of the top status line. Move the mouse pointer up to the menu bar and you will find that a menu drops down as soon as the pointer highlights one of the menu options. Move the pointer to right and left and you will find that different menu boxes appear for each of the available options.

Now you have seen what the menus look like we can get down to creating a document. Unlike some programs, Protext does not require you to name a document before you can start entering text, so you can start immediately.

Just type in some text and you will see it start to appear in the editing part of the screen at the cursor position. When you wish to start a new paragraph you should press the Return key twice. The first press tells Protext that it is the end of the paragraph and the second one puts a blank line between paragraphs.

You can move around the text by using the cursor keys to go up, down, left or right a character at a time, or by holding down the Shift key and using the left and right cursor keys you can move through the text a word at a time.

The Del key can be used to delete any character which is under the cursor in addition to using the Backspace key to delete the character to the left of the cursor, as already described.

In addition to deleting single characters, parts of a word, or complete words may also be deleted by holding down Shift and pressing Del to delete from the current cursor position to the end of the word on which the cursor is placed, or Shift and Backspace to delete from the character before the cursor to the start of the word. Experiment with these to see the effects.

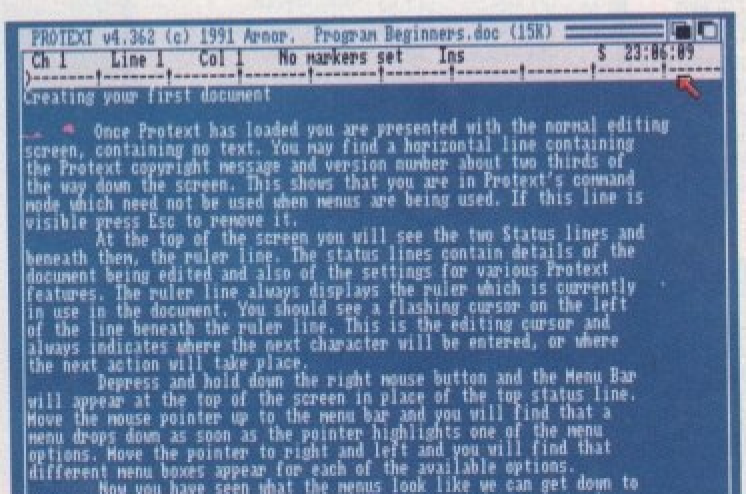
You are now going to add a new sentence at the start of the current paragraph, so move the mouse pointer over the first character at the start of the paragraph and click the left mouse button to move the cursor to the start of the paragraph.

Menu options

Alternatively, you could have used one of the menu options. To see this in action we shall use another of Protext's features to restore the cursor to its previous position. Click on the right mouse button and select the Move menu. Move the pointer down to the Last position option and select it. The cursor will be restored to its former position. This is a very useful option when you find you have accidentally moved somewhere you didn't intend to!

Now you can select the Move menu again, but this time click on the previous paragraph option and the cursor will be once again be positioned at the start of the paragraph.

This is one of many examples you will find where Protext provides more than one way to perform a task. You could also have made use of Protext's special keystrokes, but we shan't concern ourselves with these in this tutorial. If you


PROTEXT v4.362 (c) 1991 Arnor. Program Beginners.doc (15K)
Ch 1 Line 1 Col 1 No markers set Ins $ 23:06:09

Creating your first document

Once Protext has loaded you are presented with the normal editing screen, containing no text. You may find a horizontal line containing the Protext copyright message and version number about two thirds of the way down the screen. This shows that you are in Protext's command mode which need not be used when menus are being used. If this line is visible press Esc to remove it.

At the top of the screen you will see the two Status lines and beneath them, the ruler line. The status lines contain details of the document being edited and also of the settings for various Protext features. The ruler line always displays the ruler which is currently in use in the document. You should see a flashing cursor on the left of the line beneath the ruler line. This is the editing cursor and always indicates where the next character will be entered, or where the next action will take place.

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Now you have seen what the menus look like we can get down to creating a document. Unlike some programs, Protext does not require you to name a document before you can start entering text, so you can start immediately.

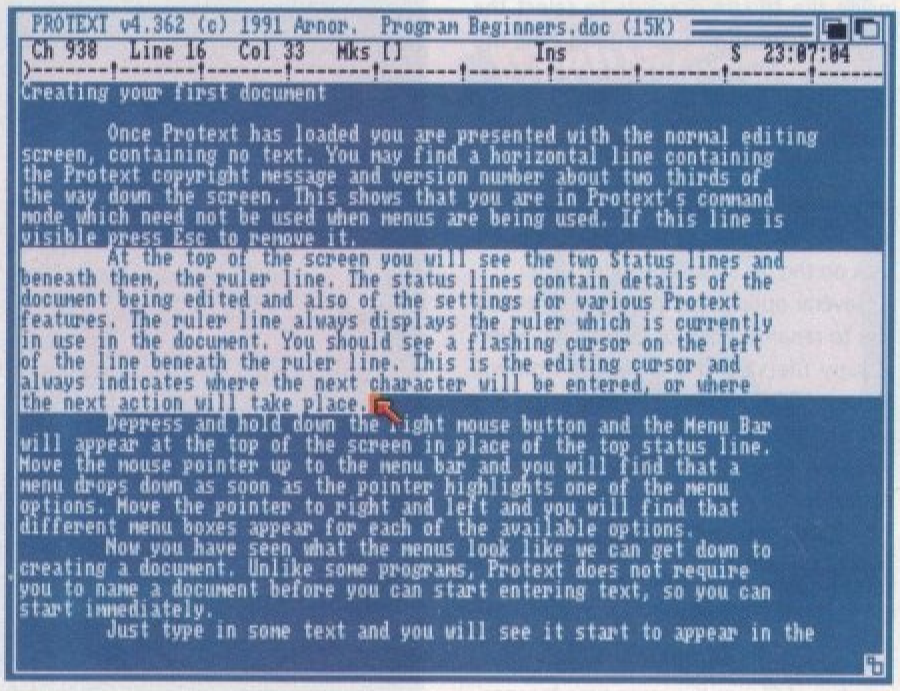
Just type in some text and you will see it start to appear in the

Protext – a nice and simple layout but with very powerful features

want to try them, the appropriate keystrokes are shown to the right of the options in the menus and are fully described in the main manual (see our upgrade options for details).

Type in a further sentence or two at the start of the paragraph and you will see that the existing text moves over to the right automatically to make room for the new text. This is called insert mode but Protext also has an overwrite mode.

Display the menu bar and open the Option menu. You will see that this menu is similar to the other menus we have used except that some of the options have a tick against them on the left-hand side. These options determine the default way in which Protext works and their settings remain in force until such time as you toggle them again.



With Protext edit large chunks of text

Toggling

Select the Overwrite mode option and a tick will appear on the left. Close the menu, by clicking the left button with the pointer outside the menu and then try typing a further sentence. This time, you will find that instead of moving the existing text to the right to make room, the new text overwrites what was already there.

Most people choose to work in insert mode for most of the time, but it can be useful to be able to overwrite things rather than delete and replace them sometimes. Select the Option menu once more and toggle off the Overwrite mode option.

Now move the cursor back down to the end of the document with the mouse and press Return a number of times until the text at the top of the screen starts to scroll out of sight, then type in a few more words.

We shall now go to the start of the document and insert a new paragraph. As the top of the document has scrolled off the top of the screen we can no longer just move the cursor to where we want.

Instead, we can either use a menu option, or scroll the screen with the mouse until we can see the start. If you want to use the menus, you can select the Move menu and the To Start of Text option, but for now we shall use the mouse.

Position the pointer on the lower status line (the second line down from the top of the screen) and click the left button. Each time you click on this line the screen will scroll a screen page towards the start of the document, until the start is on the top line. You can then position the cursor at the start of the line by moving the pointer to the position and clicking.

We now need to insert a blank line at the top of the document into which to start typing the new paragraph. Select the Line menu and the Insert line option. A new line will be inserted above the line on which the cursor is positioned. Now type in some more text. When you have finished, press Return twice to end the paragraph and insert the blank line between paragraphs.

Delete it

Having learned how to insert new lines, we shall now learn how to delete them. Position the cursor on the top line of the document. It doesn't matter where on the line the cursor is placed as we shall be deleting complete lines. Select the Line menu and the Delete line option. The line on which the cursor was placed will disappear and the lines beneath will move up to fill the gap.

Protext also has an Undelete feature which is capable of restoring the last block of text deleted. As far as Undelete is concerned, a block is any section of text over three characters long removed in one go. This includes lines as well as marked blocks of text (described later in the manual). To see this is action, position the cursor at the start.

A useful tip is that the same block may be undeleted more than once. This can be put to good use when you have a number of lines which are similar which you want to enter. Just enter the line once, delete it, then undelete it as many times as you want. You can then go back and make any minor changes required to the other lines.

We shall now go to the end of the document, either by selecting the end of text option from the Move menu, or by scrolling the text with the mouse. To scroll to the end, move the pointer down to the bottom line of the screen and click the left button repeatedly until the end is visible, then position the cursor by pointing and clicking.

It would be a good idea to save the document at this point, as it is always good policy to regularly save your work.

Select the File menu and the Save as ... option. Note that the option is followed by three dots, as also are some other options in menus. This is an indication that the option leads to a dialogue box. When the option is selected, the dialogue box will appear, containing the message "SAVE filename:".

This is the first example of a dialogue box that we have encountered. Protext has a number of dialogue boxes for different purposes and we shall come across further examples later, but in this case it is a Text Box. These are used where you are required to type in text, rather than just select something and always contain text describing what is required. Key in FIRSTONE as the name and press the Return key to confirm the entry. That's it. Your document is safely saved to disk.

As you will have noticed, the Move and Line menus provide a number of other options in addition to those we have already used.

The Move menu allows you to move the cursor to the start or end of a sentence, or line, to the previous or next paragraph, or page as well as the start and end of a document.

The Line menu allows you to not only insert and delete lines, but also to delete parts of a line or sentence, from the current cursor position.

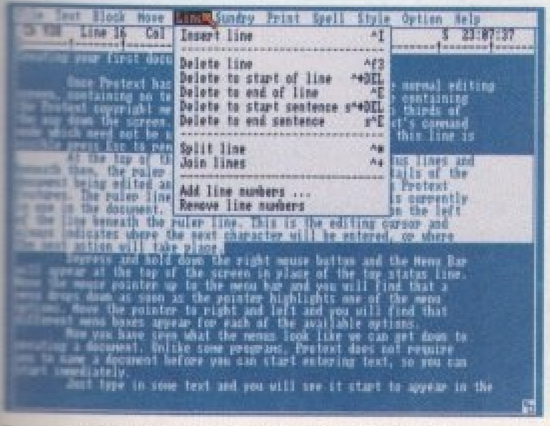
As these options function in the same way as those which you have already used, we suggest that you experiment with them now, to see the results, using the document you have already created.

File selector

The file selector is automatically displayed whenever you select a menu option to load or merge a file and in other situations where a file is to be loaded, such as a different configuration file. The file selector may also be called from the File menu by selecting the Catalogue files ... option.

Protext's file selector allows you to carry out various disk "housekeeping" tasks, such as copying, renaming, deleting files and creating new directories in addition to loading files. Other housekeeping tasks not available in the file selector, such as formatting disks, deleting directories and so on, may be carried out from Protext's command line.

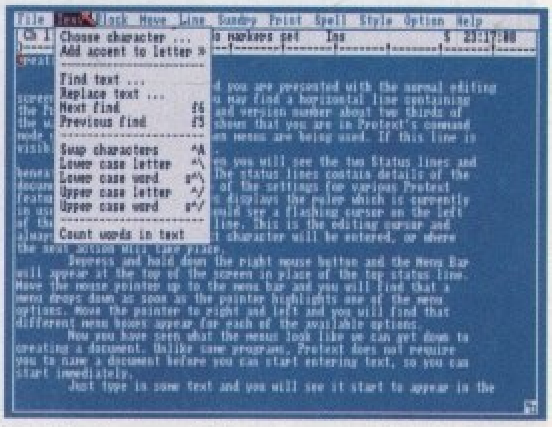
Select the Load File option from the Files menu and all the screen, apart from the status lines, will be replaced by a large file selector with a menu of options at the bottom. Depending on how many files there are in the current directory, one or more columns of filenames and directory names will be displayed. ➤



Protext has all the usual editing features and more



With this menu you can configure Protext to your own system



Use either the easy pull-down menus or the key commands

Directories are listed first, followed by the files in alphabetical order.

Directories are always indicated by a entry to the right of the name, whereas the available options are displayed in a two line menu at the bottom of the window and may be selected either by pressing the key indicated in square brackets, or by double clicking inside the square brackets.

Loading files

To load a file, select the required file by pointing with the mouse and double clicking on the entry, or highlight the entry with a single click and then double click on the Return menu option. This same procedure is used when the Merge File option is selected, but when you click on the required file, it will be merged into the document at the current cursor location.

Select and load a document now, then move the cursor to a suitable place in the document and use the Merge File option to merge a selected file into the existing document.

If the current drive/directory is not the one containing the file(s) you want to load or work on, you will need to change to it. To change drives, you must select the [D]rive change option, either by double clicking on the D, or by pressing the D key.

A dialogue box will open with the prompt "Enter path:", and you should type in the name of the directory you want. The file window will clear and be replaced by the contents of the new drive and the heading at the top of the window will change to show the new drive and directory.

Move the mouse pointer to a directory entry and click on it to highlight it. The directory may then be selected as the current directory by pressing Return or double clicking on the entry in the menu. The list of files will change to show the files available in the directory.

If there are a large number of files it is often more convenient to see only a range of the files. This can be done by changing the file specification. Double click on the F inside the square brackets to select the [F]ile specification option and edit the existing entry, using wildcards and characters, to something which will match only some of the files.

The list of files will change, showing only those files which match the file specification. To show all files again, double click on the [A] Show ALLoption.

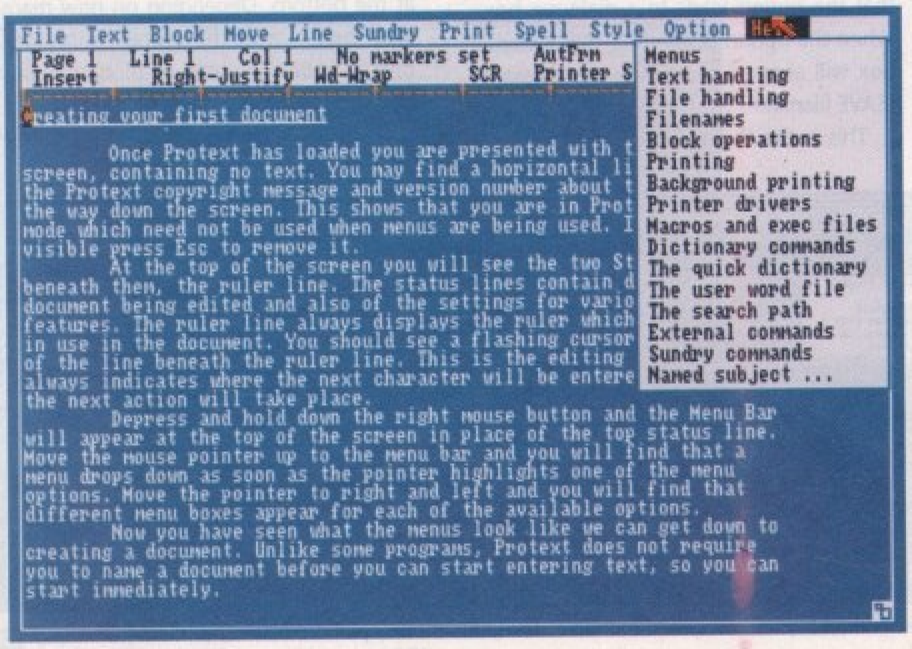
Several options are provided to enable you to rename, copy or delete files. Select [C]opy file(s) and a dialogue box will request "COPY from (filename):". this is a request for the name of the file, or files, you wish to copy. The file(s) do not need to be in the current directory, which is why it does not automatically use a highlighted filename.

Wildcards

Copy will also allow you to copy a number of files at the same time by specifying wildcards. Once you have entered the name of the file(s) you want to copy and confirmed the entry, a second dialogue box will request "COPY to (file or path):". If you have specified a single file name you may specify a different filename for the destination, but if you have specified wildcards, you must specify a destination directory.

The final menu option in the file selector is the [N]ew dir. option and allows you to create a new directory as a sub-directory of the currently selected directory. Select this option now and a dialogue box will open, requesting MKDIR directory name:. Key in the name you require and press Return.

Next month, we'll be continuing our guide to Protext 4.3. If you can't wait until then, full Protext manuals can be purchased from Arnor at a very reasonable price. See our Protext upgrade offer for details on how to take advantage of this opportunity and how you can upgrade to Protext 5.5 for many pounds less than its retail price!





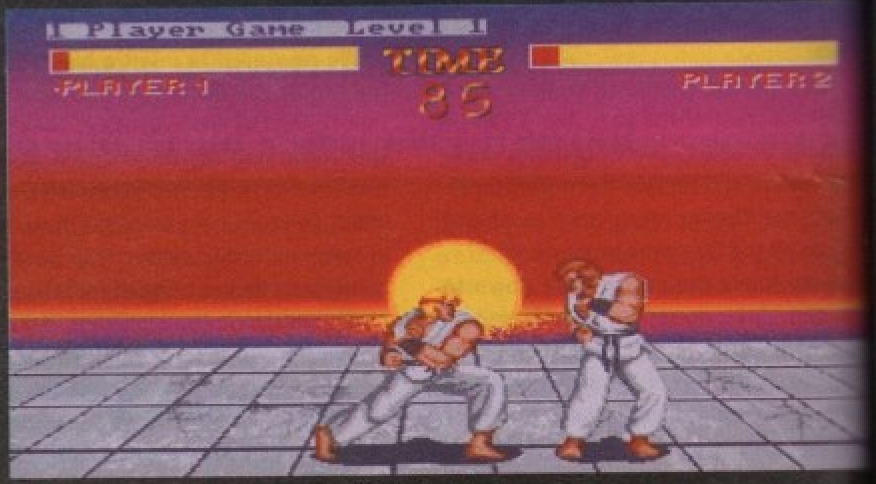
Prepare to fight with this awesome warrior

Fighting Warriors

Author: Thomas Ip

This game won't play directly from the CoverDisk because of its size, but there no need to worry as we've made the process of un-archiving the game as simple as possible.

Simply make sure you have a blank disk for Fighting Warriors to go on the click on the Make-A-Disk icon in The-Game-Of-The-Month drawer on the



You'll need all your wits about you to difeat the dude

Amigadex

Author: Ray Lambert

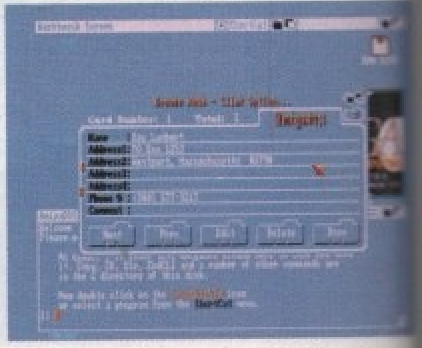
Ever wanted to store all your phone numbers and important addresses on your computer but been put off by complicated databases? Well we've got the solution for you – Amigadex!.

Amigadex is essentially a computerised version of a rolladex, which stores addresses and phone numbers on cards. Each file will store a person's name, address, phone number and a short memo.

Once you've set Amigadex off and running it will ask you if you want to use the file "s:Amigedex.cards" which is already on the disk as an example, If you select No then it will prompt you for the name of the new file you wish to create. Amigadex will then create the new file and put it in the directory you specify.

Once you've entered your data you can browse through it by just flicking from card to card. To search for a particular file, click on browse and then click in the search string window and type the name of the person or any details of the file you wish to see.

Amigadex also allows you to edit existing files. All you have to do is select the particular file you wish to edit, click on the edit icon, then again on the line you wish to edit. Once you've finished editing or browsing you can print out some or all the files in your database.



Amigadex simple but ver useful address book



There's no time to rest just give it all you've got

CoverDisk. Wait for the prompt to ask for the disk which is to be initialised, then insert your blank disk and sit back while the game un-archives onto your disk (this can take some time). Once all of this is finished you should have a self-booting copy of Fighting Warriors.

The game itself is a good old beat-'em-up kung-fu style with lots of joystick waggling. When playing this game the object is to beat the living daylights of your opponent.

There's not much point in me telling you how to play this game. The best bet is to get stuck in and start kicking some butts. If you do get stuck just read the docs on the disk.



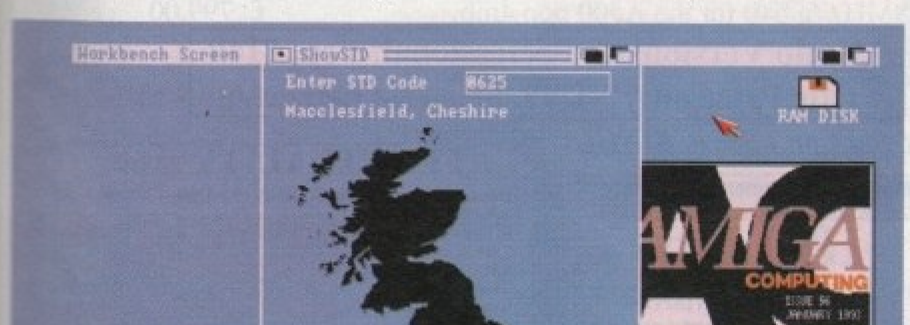
RIP – no good crying about it mate

ShowSTD

Author: Andrew Harrison

Once started this program presents you with a map of Britain and a box to type in STD codes. All you have to do is type in the code and program not only tells you which area it belongs to but it will display it on the map as well.

ShowSTD is quite useful if you've been given a phone number from someone with an STD code you are unfamiliar with and you want to see where it is, or if you have a modem so you don't go ringing the other side of England before cheap rate times.



With Show STD you'll never be in doubt as to which side of England you're phoning again



Grammar

Author: R Sarna

Grammar is a program used to check your grammar in text files you have made in a wordprocessor. It can be used to check things like repeated words, split infinitives, the use of certain words and much more. To use grammar you have to enter CLI and type "grammar <FILENAME>" where Filename is the full path and the actual name of the file.

As Grammar is a CLI command, just copy it into the C: directory of your working disk for it to be readily available.

Batman

This is a rather good version of the old batman tune from the original series. The tune is completely self running so just click on the Tune-of-the-Month icon and then the Batman icon to hear it. All that is left then is to put on your cape and run round the house shouting POW! ZAP! and things like that.

Toasters

WB2 ONLY

Author: Gernot Reisinger

Toasters is a program which blanks the screen and then displays flying toasters after a nominated time during which the computer has not been touched, thus saving the screen from phosphor burning.

There are two versions of this program on the CoverDisk, one for standard WB.2 Amigas and one for accelerated Amigas with a 680x0 processor fitted. Flying Toasters works as a background task so when you first start the program you need to press shift+F1 to fetch it to the screen.

Its use is fairly self-explanatory once up and running, but docs are on the disk for those who become confused.

Shareware needs you!

Please remember that many of the program distributed on the *Amiga Computing* CoverDisk are shareware releases. This means that the authors have kindly allowed you, the reader, to sample the program before paying for it.

If you decide to keep a program and intend to use it regularly, you should register as a shareware user with the author. Full details on how to register can be found, where appropriate, in the on-disk documentation.

Shareware authors, if they don't receive enough registrations, will eventually stop releasing programs to the public, which would dry up an indispensible supply of superb software. Keep the faith, and keep sending those fivers!

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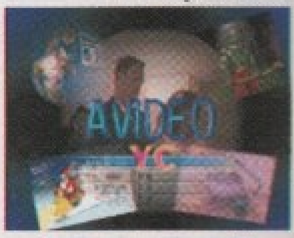
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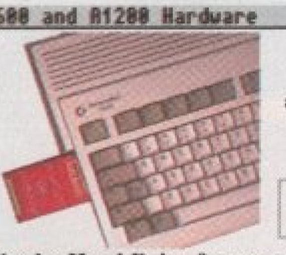
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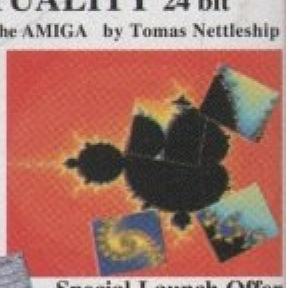
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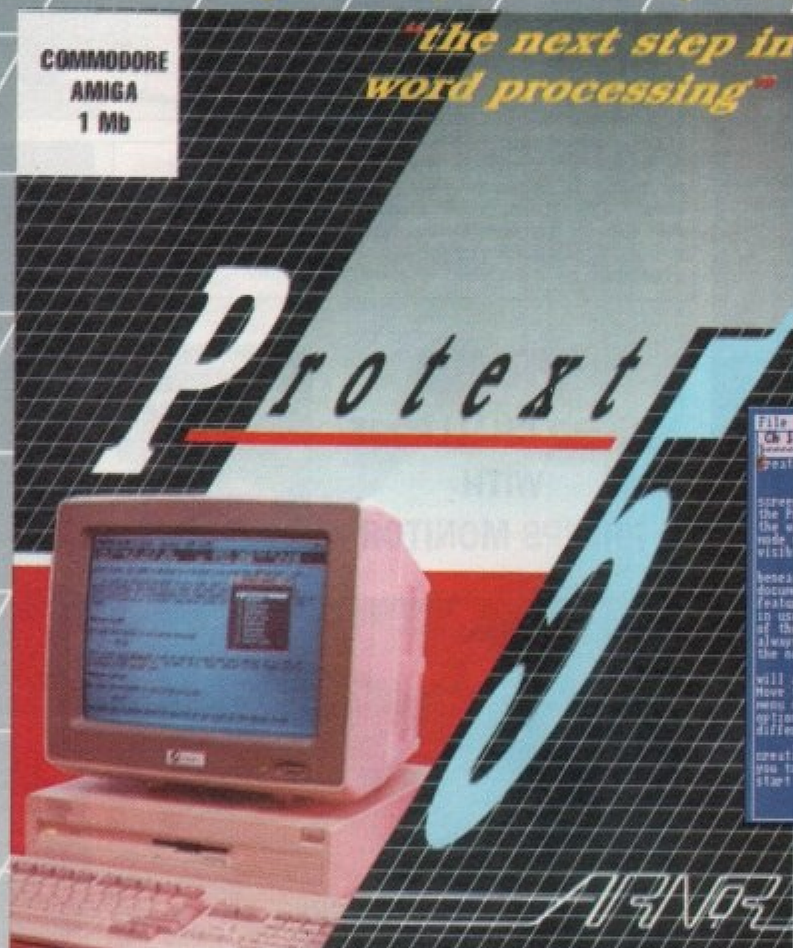
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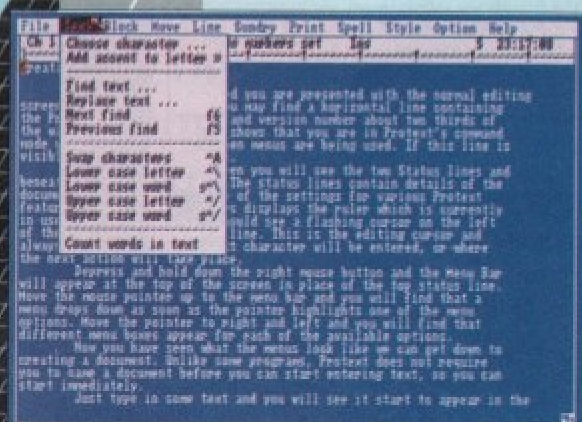
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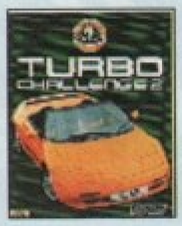
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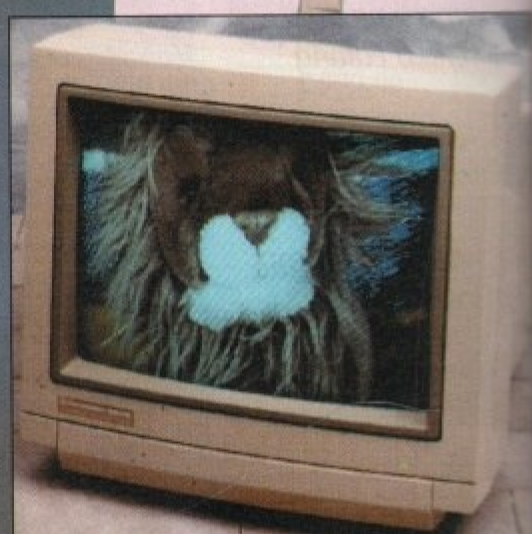
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The Commodore monster has always been a strange beast but over the last year they've out done themselves with more seemingly conflicting product launches in 12 short months than over the previous eight years.

As release after release piled up the inevitable confusion and subsequent frustration began to build. One minute the A500, then the Plus, then the A600, suddenly the 500 was no more – where will it all end, screamed countless shell-shocked punters.

Well folks, after the chaos, the calm. Although the big C have pulled numerous fast ones courtesy of the A500, A500 Plus and A600 fiascos, the A1200 should bring all that to an end.

For those who've sunk hard-earned pennies into an A600 recently, the release of an amazing new machine probably won't be the best news you've ever had, especially considering its price point hovers only a hundred pounds over that of the A600.

Tomorrow's machines

Although irritating for some, it's time to cast all confusion aside and usher in tomorrow's machines.

In simple terms, the A1200 is basically a cut-down A4000. Although the CPU is a 68020 as opposed to a 68040, the basic structure of custom chips remain the same.

The aforementioned 68020 isn't exactly state of the art in computing terms, but when combined with the awesome AGA chipset the partnership is a real world beater.

Because of the new CPU, and the full 32-bit architecture that comes with it, the new machine obtains speeds between three to five times faster than a standard Amiga.

Games especially will undergo a revolution in the coming months thanks to the extra speed and incredible graphics potential of the AGA.

The AGA is one of those computing acronyms born to create confusion, especially when it's already undergone two title changes prior to general release. First Pandora, then AA, and now AGA, or Advanced Graphic Architecture.

The power of the AGA system comes from a combination of factors. Firstly there's the aforementioned 32-bit design as opposed to the 16-bit system within a standard machine.

In addition 300,000 transistors have been crammed in to handle the staggering amounts of graphic data required for the improved repertoire of colours and power screen modes – standard 256 display, Ham8, 1,280 x 580 resolution, and so on. In addition to the new screen modes, there is a 24-bit palette which becomes 25-bit with the addition of an extra bit for genlocking.

> *'Games will undergo a revolution in the coming months'*

From the 16.7 million colour palette, the available number of on-screen has exploded from the 4,096 of Ham and just 16 greyscales to the unbelievable quality of Ham8 which with the assistance of 64 colour registers makes 262,000 colours on-screen second nature and up to 700,000 possible in the highest resolutions.

As well as the huge jump in screen colours, the 64 base colour registers drastically reduce the dreaded fringing which haunted Ham of old. For greyscales there's been a similar quality explosion with 256 levels of grey as opposed to just 16 on a standard machine.

Even without the new Ham format, the increase in the machine's colour power is still awe-inspiring, with 256 on offer in all standard Amiga modes. This instantly brings the machine on a par with the best any PC or Mac can offer.

As well as colour, eight different screen modes await plus built-in software flicker fixing as standard. No more need for a Commodore or third-party flicker fixers. Just like the ECS on the A500 Plus and A600, all that's required for hi-res modes such as productivity is a monitor with a suitable scan rate – either VGA or multisync – and you can kiss flicker goodbye for good.

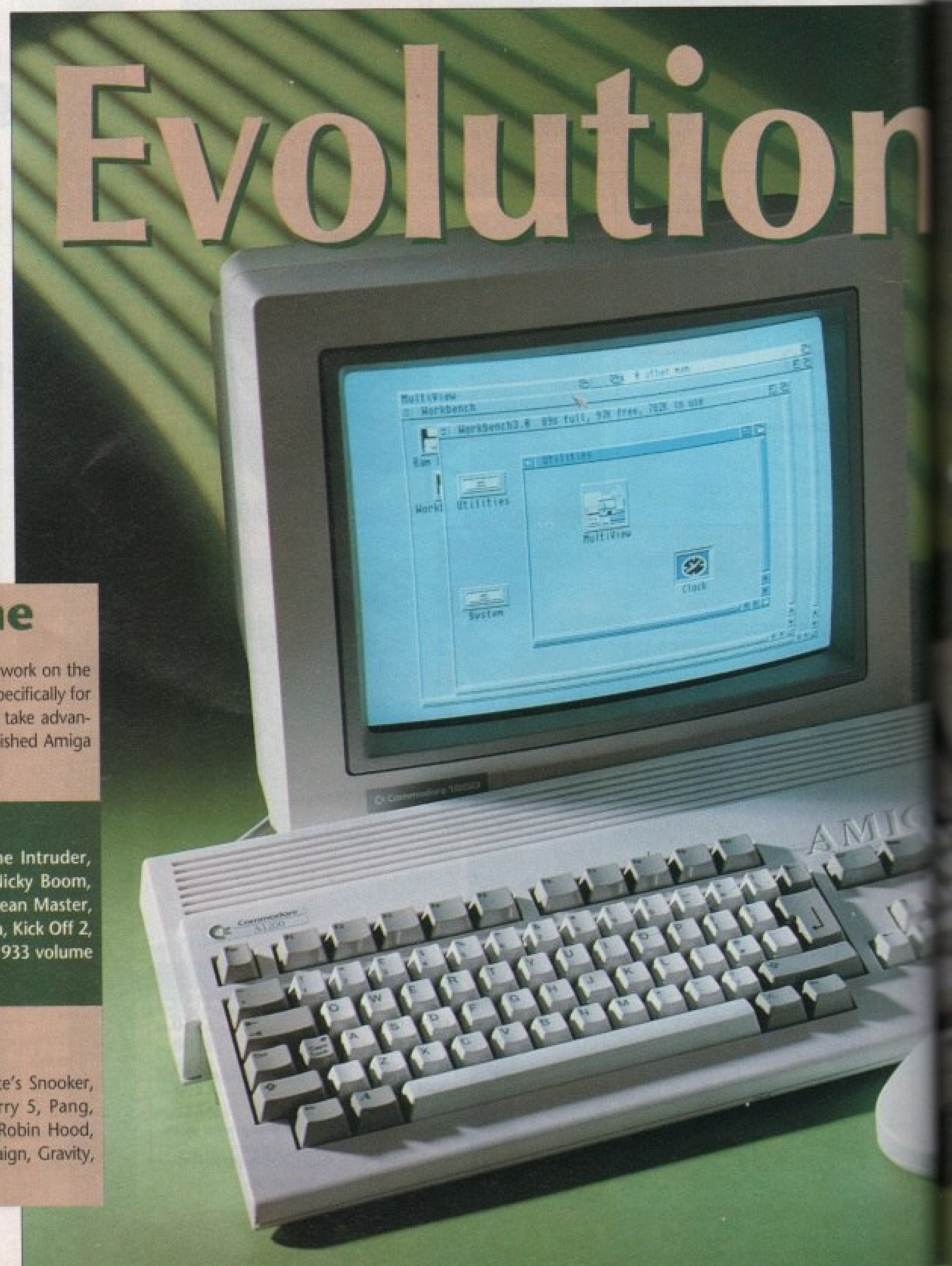
32-bit architecture

In short, the Amiga's repertoire as a productivity and more precisely a DTP/precision platform is complete, and more importantly available from a machine retailing for under £400.

With the increase in resolution and colour, an obvious worry is that of screen update. However, thanks to the 32-bit architecture as opposed to 16 there's an immediate doubling of data transfer.

This is added to by the super fast AGA which effectively manages 64-bit transfer. Thanks to RAM technology which makes two fetches per cycle transfer rates are effectively quadrupled. As standard the A1200 is shipped with 2Mb of

Evolution



Playing the game

We've compiled a list of popular games which do and don't work on the new machine. Remember, none of these games are written specifically for the A1200 – you'll have to wait for dedicated games which take advantage of its new features – rather, those listed here are established Amiga titles.

Games which work...

Putty, Zool, Guy Spy, Psyborg, Doodlebug, Flight of the Intruder, Assassin, Troddless, Ween, Ashes of Empire, Anarchy, Nicky Boom, Panza Kick Boxing, IK+, Air Support, R.V.F. Honda, Dungean Master, Tennis Cup, Shadow of the Beast 3, Alcatraz, Aquaventura, Kick Off 2, Discovery in the steps of Columbus, 1000 Miglia (1927-1933 volume 1), No Second Place

...and those which don't

Switchlade 2, Kyrandia, The Cool Croc Twins, Jimmy White's Snooker, Supercars 2, Predator 2, Street Fighter, Leisure Suit Larry 5, Pang, Heroquest, The Carl Lewis Challenge, The Adventures of Robin Hood, Super Sapce Invaders, Space Crusade, Paradroid 90, Campaign, Gravity, Suspicious Cargo

chip RAM – yet another bonus those nice Commodore people should be commended for.

However, 2Mb is only the beginning as third-party suppliers are already offering compatible 16-bit RAM expansions and perhaps more importantly IDE hard disks fitted as standard, ranging from 40Mb up.

Although third-party hard disks are available, your official Commodore guarantee is invalidated by the installation process, so I strongly advise any would-be buyer to ensure that the retailer in question offers a personal guarantee for any subsequent repairs.

This being the case, it's again wise to ensure your supplier is reputable and can actually back-up the guarantees on offer. If the prospect of invalidation is a risk you're not willing to take, Commodore have promised factory-fitted IDEs during the spring of '93 ranging from 20Mb right up to 200.

In addition to a hard disk, RAM expansion is equally important. Here again the A1200 scores well with two upgrading options. The simplest method is to employ the PCMCIA expansion port which will accept up to 8Mb of 16-bit RAM. The PCMCIA cards employed are identical to those used on the A600 which as mentioned above are already ➤

Entering the game zone

With the transition from a standard 16-bit 68000 to a full 32-bit 68020 there's obviously going to be certain amount of incompatibility between formats. However compatibility may not be quite as big a problem as you'd expect.

Commodore are quoting figures that suggest around 60 per cent of existing software will still work perfectly with the new AGA, and this figure can be improved even further by holding down both mouse buttons on boot-up which produces a mode selection screen which allows the user to specify which chipset the machine will employ.

Both the OCS or old chipset and the ECS or enhanced chipset are stored alongside th? AGA. As a result, mode selection is an invaluable tool in the battle against incompatibility.

In addition to mode selection, additional RAM could also play a part in the struggle as often many programs require a certain amount of fast RAM.

As the A1200 ships exclusively with 2Mb of chip RAM, investment in a suitable PCMCIA may well be worth the additional cost in order to resurrect a few old friends.

Sacrifice

Although a problem, it's the new machine's gaming strengths that will make the sacrifice of any old software well worth the heartache.

For example, although the A1200 offers only a 68020 at 14.28MHz – roughly twice that of a standard Amiga – the increase in graphic handling courtesy of the AGA will mean graphic update five times that of a normal machine.

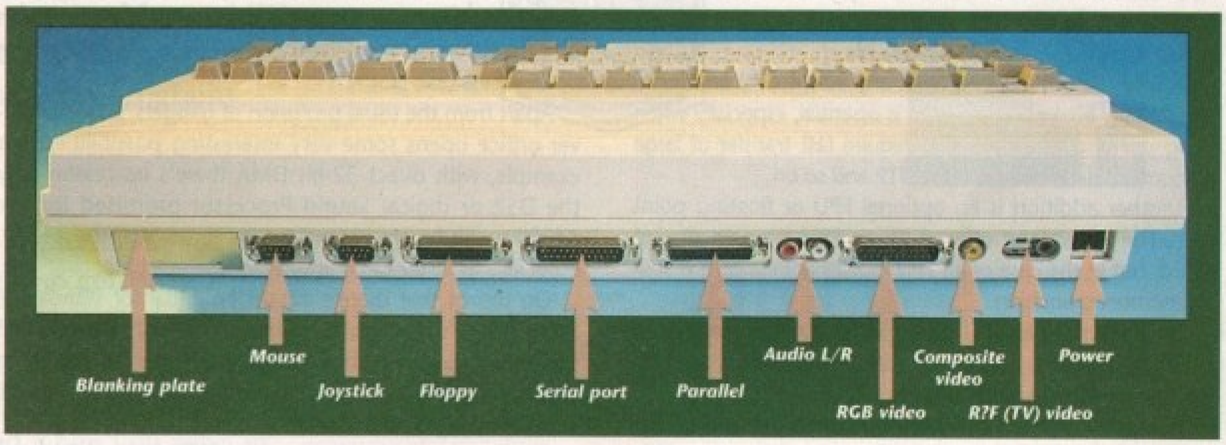
This is a performance which in real terms will easily match any 386SX PC for speed and totally annihilate it for smoothness thanks to 2Mb of chip memory as opposed to the maximum of just 640k of base memory found on even the fastest 486s.

Aside from pure update speeds, the animated images themselves will undergo a revolution with a leap from an average of 16 colours to anything from 128 to 256, providing the kind of gaming environment the average PC owner has been all to keen to show stuttering along in the past.

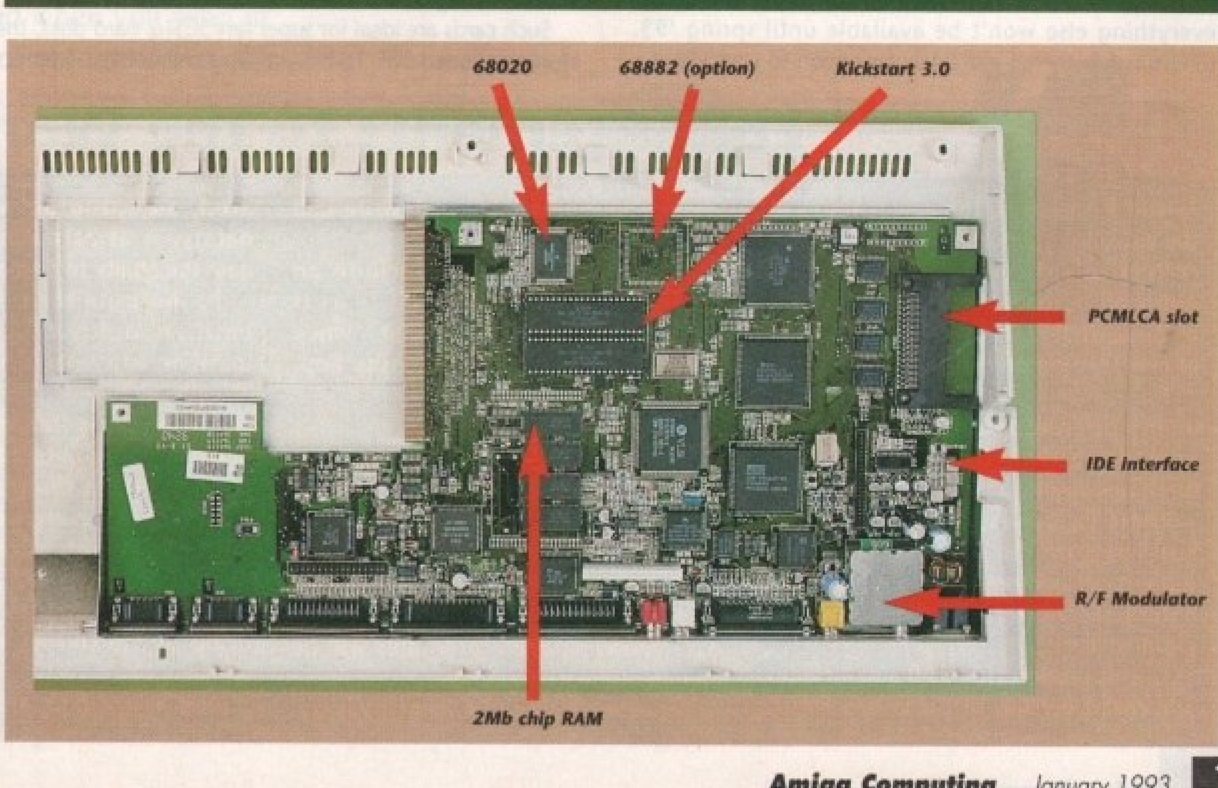
As if that's not enough, hardware scrolling has been dramatically improved while an additional two 16-colour playfields allows Hedgehog-style parallax scrolling.

of the species

After a year of constant change and endless speculation the ultimate entry-level machine has finally arrived. Paul Austin explores what is perhaps the hottest release in Amiga history







Improvements

A welcome planned improvement is that of a high density floppy as found on the A4000 and the vast majority of PCs.

Although a relatively minor inconvenience the lack of a high density floppy is a strange omission as Workbench 3.0 – the shared OS of both the A4000 and A1200 – supports the option by default.

With the increase in file sizes prompted by Ham8, a high density would seem an obvious choice from the off. Still, as with almost all the upgrades mentioned, Commodore have assured that high densities will appear in the A1200 during the first quarter of '93.

However, I'm sure with the option already available to the machine it won't be long before the Amiga's army of third-party developers begin to offer high density floppies with their 1.76Mb storage as an added incentive to prospective investors.

And before you lament the demise of your existing software, it's worth mentioning that the high density within the A4000 is equally at home with a standard Amiga disk as it is with a high density, reading both formats automatically.

➤

widely available in their 2 and 4Mb forms. Although this is an instant and easily accessible method of expansion it's not the ideal approach for certain applications.

The main drawback of 16-bit expansion is one of speed. Obviously employing 16-bit access on a true 32-bit machine involves compromise. A faster alternative is to use true 32-bit RAM which provides direct memory access or DMA for the CPU.

Again like its predecessors, the A1200 has a trapdoor and it's here where additional 4Mb of 32-bit RAM can be installed. Alas the aforementioned upgrade like the official hard drive option won't be available until early '93, but it's an option which may prove invaluable.

In order to get the best from any 32-bit CPU additional and directly accessible fast RAM is essential, especially when using power applications that require fast transfer of large amounts of data, such as DTV, DTP and so on.

Another addition is an optional FPU or floating point unit. The advantage offered by an FPU is again one of speed, but in the case of an FPU its primary concern is serious number crunching.

Once installed, an FPU takes care of the vast majority of the complex maths needed for applications such as ray tracing thereby freeing more valuable CPU time.

The option for either a Motorola 68881 or 68882 like everything else won't be available until spring '93. Unfortunately there's absolutely no option to upgrade at a later date. FPUs are strictly factory fitted, and there's no way to upgrade later without upgrading to a faster CPU/FPU combination.



The entire A1200 chipset – with the exception of the CPU – is surface-mounted, including the FPU, so I'm afraid there's no turning back. If you have ray tracing tendencies or a liking for power applications, waiting for the arrival of the FPU option is worth very serious consideration.

Another planned upgrading route concerns the CPU itself. Although a huge improvement on the original 68000, the A1200 boasts up-chipability built directly into the design. Here again the trapdoor adds yet another twist by allowing CPU and presumably FPU accelerator combinations to be plugged directly into the machine.

Curious strip

As a result, there's no reason why -030s, -040s and beyond can't be added simply as an old-style trapdoor RAM expansion. As you may see from the photography there's a rather curious metal strip on the rear of the machine.

Could it be that this is a cartridge slot for the rumoured Amiga console? According to Commodore's very own Andrew Ball I'm afraid not. Apparently the aforesaid slot is designed with even further expansion in mind.

Because the side of the machine is already taken up by the PCMCIA slot and the trapdoor potentially packed with a 32-bit RAM and accelerator combination, it's here where DMA access take place.

Apart from the usual profusion of gadgets, this small silver orifice opens some very interesting possibilities. For example, with direct 32-bit DMA there's no reason why the DSP or digital Sound Processor promised for the A4000 won't be able to make a move towards the A1200, especially as faster CPUs appear for the machine.

On top of that there's instant potential for standalone Zorro boxes which could be independently powered and connected directly to the machine, offering the one thing that the A1200 lacks, namely access to third-party Zorro III cards boasting 32-bit transfer

Such cards are ideal for super fast SCSI-2 hard disks, the aforementioned DSP 16-bit sampling technology, graphics cards and so on, which in the past have been purely the domain of larger members of the Amiga range such as the A3000 and now A4000. Of course, this is all hypothetical at the moment but the potential is there, ready to be taken advantage of by third-party developers and perhaps even Commodore themselves.

Conclusion

Basically I think the facts speak for themselves. Just as the Amiga was the successor to the 64, the new AGA machines are sure to supersede the ageing 16-bit technology of their predecessors.

As for features, the A1200 is nothing short of spectacular in both its standard form and as a platform for expansion.

For enthusiasts and game players alike the A1200 is ideal, although a mid-range machine based around an 030 is certain for the middle of '93, bridging the gap between the A1200 and A4000.

If you're looking for the next step up the evolutionary ladder the A1200 is quite simply the only option under £2,000 worthy of consideration.

AC

Enhancements to the Workbench

As you'd expect, all the new features of the AGA are supported by the new OS collectively titled Amiga OS 3.0. Although in many respects very similar to AmigaDOS 2.04 there are a number of new features on hand.

Not surprisingly, all the enhancements offered by the AmigaDOS 2.1 upgrade recently issued for OCS/ESC machines await.

These include language localisation, PostScript printer support, enhanced support for outlined fonts, an improved ASL file requester and the option for sampled alerts.

Like its predecessor, v3.0 also includes a licensed version of CrossDOS which allows the machine to read, write and format 720k MS-DOS disks.

This presumably will include an option for 1.44Mb PC disks – as is already the case on the A4000 – when the aforementioned high density floppies appear.

Library

Perhaps the most exciting addition is that of datatypes which work via the new datatyped library. The end result is that whenever a new datatype is written and added to your system, other datatype-compatible programs will be able to utilise its potential.

For example, if a PCX datatype is created, any program which employs datatypes as an option will instantly gain the ability to display PCX images.

To illustrate the point, a program entitled Multiview comes with the machine which courtesy of datatypes already included with OS 3.0 has the ability to display standard IFFs in all resolutions including Ham8, view text files, hear sampled sounds and examine AmigaGuide hypertext files.

Obviously with the improved screen modes and colour selection, Preferences has been improved to handle palettes of up to 256 colours via a new colour wheel.

And in addition, an impressive new feature allows the user to specify IFF pictures as backdrops for both Workbench and windows.

As well as improving the environment, sprites have also had some long overdue attention and no longer have to suffer the indignity of lo-res. No longer the ugliest part of the Workbench environment, they're now resplendent in the resolution of you choice and completely independent of the screen on which they appear.

A small improvement perhaps, but no matter how trivial a 64-pixel Super hi-res pointer may be, it's a lot more attractive than its chunky lo-res predecessors. As they say, the little things add up.

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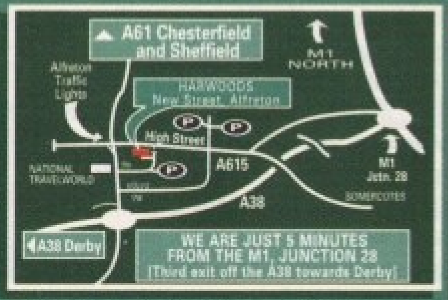
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For a year now, the big battalions in the Amiga's productivity sector have been sniping at each other in a fairly desultory fashion.

The odd bombardment of fonts, a dawn raid in the form of PostScript support, or sporadic gas attacks through magazine advertising pages have been the sum total of activity.

The stakes, however, have just been raised and the comfortable phoney war is about to end.

Months of propagandist outpourings in the Amiga press during which the WP arms race went into top gear saw companies scrambling to support the new chipset with upgrades of existing packages, and the stage is now set for a battle royal between the wysiwyg warriors.

For the winner, the spoils of war will be a large slice of the home productivity market, and for the loser, um, a smaller slice.

The opening shot was fired by Softwood Inc, reversing the Americans' normal trend of always arriving late for the war, but Digita and New Horizons weren't slow to shoot back.

Final Copy II is a product made for the instant appeal merchants. It is fast, colourful in the extreme, and very Mac-like in its user interface.

ProWrite 3.3 and Wordworth 2, on the other hand, are more traditional wordprocessors with excellent wysiwyg displays and more powerful features, but neither matches Final Copy II in the looks department.

Whether one approach will succeed over the other is a matter for every reader's preferences, but the standard of Amiga wordprocessing has taken a step forward with all three packages.

In some respects at least, the Amiga seems finally to be threatening comparisions with industry benchmarks like Word 5 on the Mac and Word for Windows 2 on the PC.

Final Copy II

Though we didn't see the original Final Copy in this country due to font copyright laws, v2 has been released at last after the Americans went bananas for its DTP qualities.

If the hype is to be believed, FCII is "designed for people who need high quality personal and business documents", and is thus the answer to both wordprocessing and professional publishing problems.

Tall claims though these may be to live up to, the program sets about the task with verve and energy as soon as it is booted. FCII has a clean, well-designed interface which immediately pleases the eye, and looks beautiful when used with the AGA-equipped A1200 or A4000.

Of the three packages on test, FCII is the only one to properly display 256-colour graphics, and what's more it does so with remarkable speed.

Speed

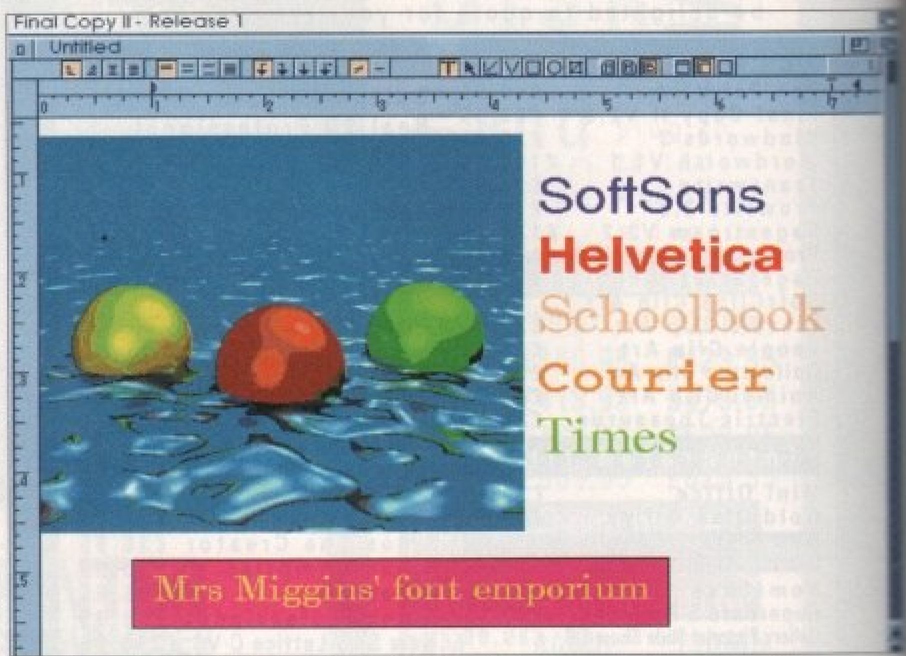
Like its ancestor, Pen Pal, FCII will import, reposition, re-size, and crop IFF files faster than almost any other package. Some might point to the AGA chips and say "so what?", but speed of graphic manipulation is equally impressive on older machines.

When placed in documents, text flow around graphics is handled well, with contoured left and right flow as well as the usual vertical options.

Flow around both sides of an irregular object isn't catered for unless the object straddles a column break, but this is identical to the way the others work, so FCII is in good company.

Picture settings enable the user to choose a border weight and colour, and it is possible to specify colour zero as transparent or opaque, handy for flowing text around irregular bitmaps.

In addition, the picture can be repositioned either in the current document or onto another page from the same



For colour and screen display Final Copy II is hard to beat

requester, and standoff (the space between the graphic and the text) is user-definable.

Graphic elements can also be layered using the Send To Back and Bring To Front options, and can be locked or unlocked to prevent accidentally re-sizing or moving them, thus causing a screen refresh.

This adds up to graphic manipulation tools not far short of DTP packages. Final Copy II lacks only a rotate function to complete its list of abilities, though in fairness the only such feature it boasts which the other wordprocessors on test lack is the crop function.

I would have liked a hide/show picture toggle to avoid sometimes lengthy screen updates, but this option is absent.

Brighter

Other graphic tools include line, rectangle and circle/ellipse, so the FCII user has plenty of options for brightening up a document.

Any square or ellipse can be filled with a colour from the palette requester and surrounded by a user-definable border, lending FCII a more than adequate edge over the other two programs.

Neither Wordworth 2 or ProWrite 3.3 offer direct on-screen graphics drawing tools.

One problem I encountered with graphics was when margins became tight around a picture. The program's insistence on squeezing text around any obstacle, even if this meant cutting words in two without hyphenating them, results in a mess which can be cleaned up only by repositioning the graphic or by a lengthy session of manual text editing.

In general, FCII does a good job of text formatting, but in this area at least it is less than perfect.

As a wordprocessor rather than a DTP package, FCII is not much better than adequate. There are many solid features, such as column mode, a decent mail



Ideal for persuasive documents, FCII scores highly in style

merge, and good spell checker and thesaurus, but in some ways the program falls way short of its competitors.

There is no "show invisibles" option, making it impossible to discover the whereabouts of carriage returns, tabs, and so on, which means that when text is imported in Ascii format, the user will be hard pressed to clean up any formatting problems.

Such a basic omission in what is, after all, a wordprocessor, came as something of a shock.

DTP aspects of text handling are superb, with control over text width, leading, oblique percentage (amount of italicisation to you and me), and colour, so it would be a niggardly accusation to say that text control is fatally flawed, but when you buy a wordprocessor you expect it to support basic wordprocessor functions.

When put beside the lack of index or list generation as offered by Wordworth, and the package's non-support for Adobe Type 1 or Agfa CompuGraphic fonts, the Final Copy II bandwagon starts to hit a few potholes.

It would be too easy to concentrate on the program's admittedly superb list of DTP features and its stunning AGA support, then skimp over the features it could or should have, but this package is being sold as a wordprocessor and it must be judged as such.

For owners of the AGA chipset machines, it would be hard not to recommend Final Copy II. It is virtually a full-colour DTP package capable of superb PostScript output and works as smoothly as one could wish.

However, those owners of older machines unable to take advantage of 256 colours, and who have plans to produce large documents requiring more meaty text-crunching features, would be advised to treat the program as a basic DTP package rather than a first choice wordsmith.

Final Copy II is a stunning program, and when it does what it does, it does it extremely well. As a foretaste of the AGA packages we might soon see, it whets what will be an insatiable end-user appetite for more colourful, more powerful software.

Unfortunately, falling between two stools as it does, it hits targets which the wordprocessing user might not aim at in the first place.

Trading standards

Computers are all about data, and wordprocessing is no exception. How, then, do the three packages fare when importing or exporting data in a variety of formats?

It is essential for the user that when an important document, perhaps passed on from the office PC, or sent through the post, is presented to his or her wordprocessor that the program doesn't turn up its nose or shrug its shoulders in ignorance.

To this end, all three packages make a varying degree of effort to support other file formats.

All three will load and save in Ascii text format, and all three can import any IFF format, including HAM8 and 24-bit. The similarities, however, end there.

Final Copy II is reasonably served by loader modules for ProWrite, WordPerfect, and Pen Pal, but its refusal to open clip art files is a blow to its flexibility.

The user need only copy new loaders to the FCLibs drawer created by the program's installation routine for Final Copy to recognise other file formats, but when and if SoftWood will release these modules is not known at the moment.

ProWrite hits a home run with support for ProDraw clip art, but falls flat with its document importing restrictions. Only ProWrite and Ascii format are recognised with the addition of documents from New Horizons' Flow program, whose files are virtually identical to ProWrite's.

The user with access to a PC or another wordprocessor is thus restricted in his or her file swapping activities.

The program's separate file conversion utility will convert documents from a number of formats, including Pen Pal, Final Copy, excellence, Kindwords, and WordPerfect, but I would have been happier to see this sort of feature built in to the main program to save a lot of faffing about.

Wordworth takes the import/export challenge head on and stamps it into the ground like some mad bull intent on free trade for all.

Graphic support covers IFF, PCX, BMP, EPS, and clip art, and document load/save options are available for no less than eight other WPs, including MS Word and WordPerfect (MSDOS only), WordPerfect Amiga, ProWrite, and ProText.

The Brits are obviously much more communicative than the Yanks in this respect.

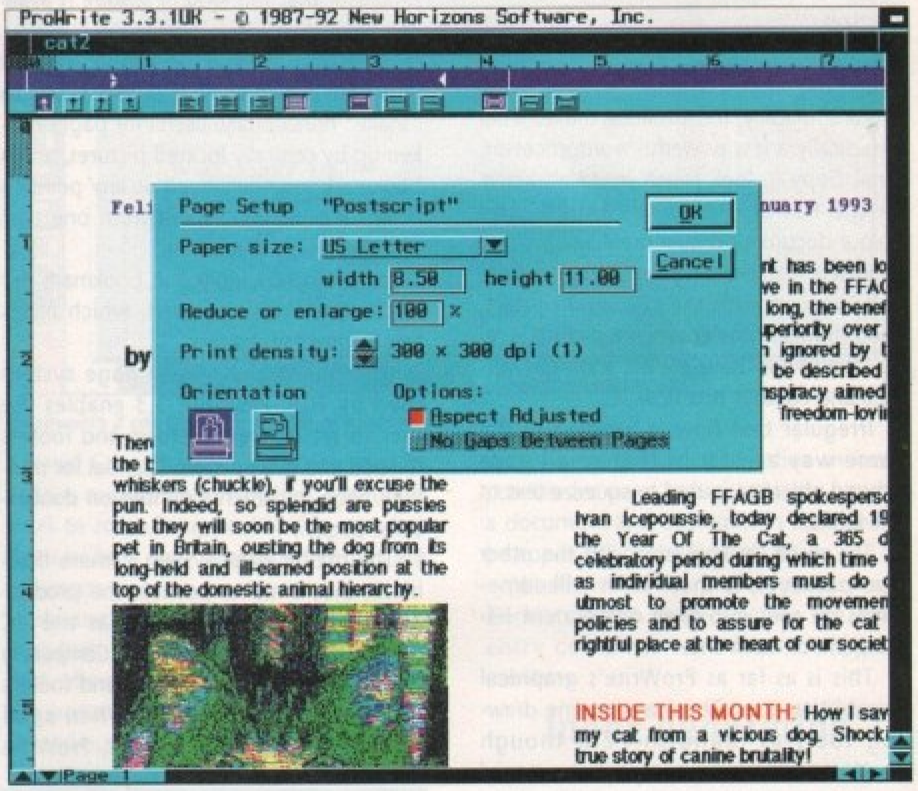
ProWrite 3.3

New Horizons and ProWrite have been in the Amiga wordprocessing business longer than almost anyone else, and the package has undergone a long evolutionary process.

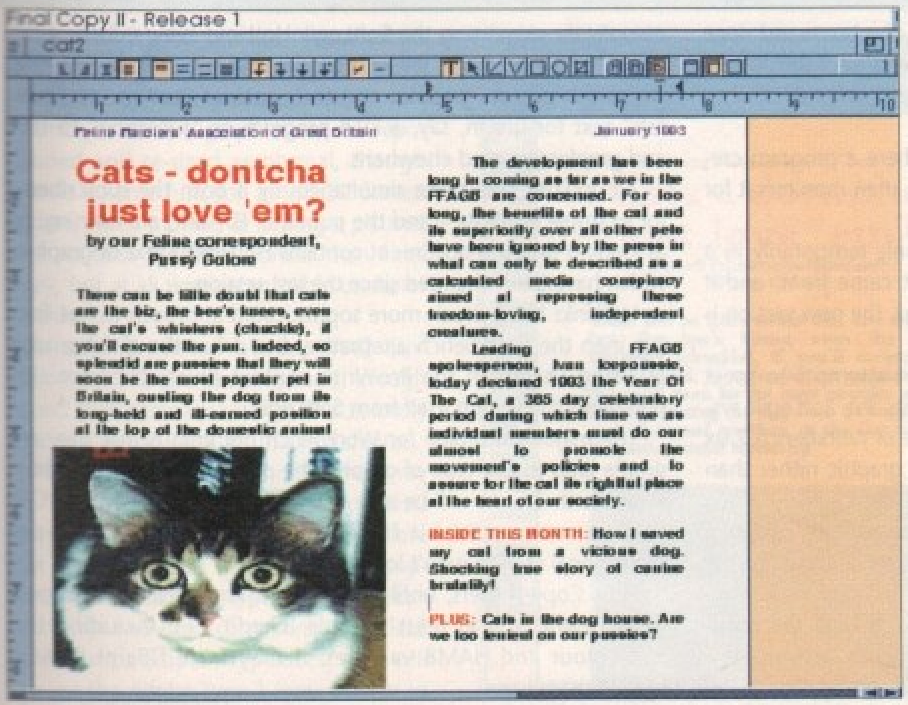
It is no surprise, then, that v3.3 has been released partly as one of ProWrite's regular upgrades, but mostly to take advantage of the AGA chip set.

What is surprising is that New Horizons have failed to completely support 256 on-screen colours when ProWrite 3.3 is used with an AGA machine such as the A4000 and A1200 on which our copy was tested.

Instead, the imported graphic is dithered as a screen picture with a maxi-



ProWrite's printing options cater for most needs



Final Copy II shows it's display superiority over the competition...



... ProWrite 3.3 will only display dithered images

mum of eight colours. True, 256-colour IFFs and the new HAM8 format are recognised and imported, but there is no visible evidence on-screen of the new colours.

In terms of the speed at which images are imported, screen versions calculated, and then displayed, ProWrite falls far behind Final Copy II.

One HAM8 image I tested with both packages was loaded and displayed by FCII in little more than five seconds, while ProWrite took over a minute to build a representation of the same IFF.

When it takes this long on an A4000 using the fast AGA chips and a 68040, something has to be wrong with the basic approach taken by the package to graphics in general.

Dithering using eight colours is a useful way to save memory and represent the graphic more accurately to those using eight-colour dot matrix printers, but in the days of the AGA chips and colour PostScript output there should be an option to enable truer 256-colour displays.

Attractive

Paradoxically, this situation makes what is basically a less powerful wordprocessor, Final Copy II, look much more attractive to the Power users with A4000s and colour document requirements.

When manipulating graphics, ProWrite can keep up with the colourful upstart, though much slower when a picture is resized, and has the usual left and right vertical and contour text flow.

Irregular text flow is handled in the same way as FCII in that small gaps around objects are used to squeeze text to the limits.

The result, in common with the other two packages, is that words will sometimes be split into their component letters, one on each line.

This is as far as ProWrite's graphical capabilities goes. There are no line drawing tools as found in FCII, though ProWrite will at least import structured drawings from other packages, something which FCII will not do.

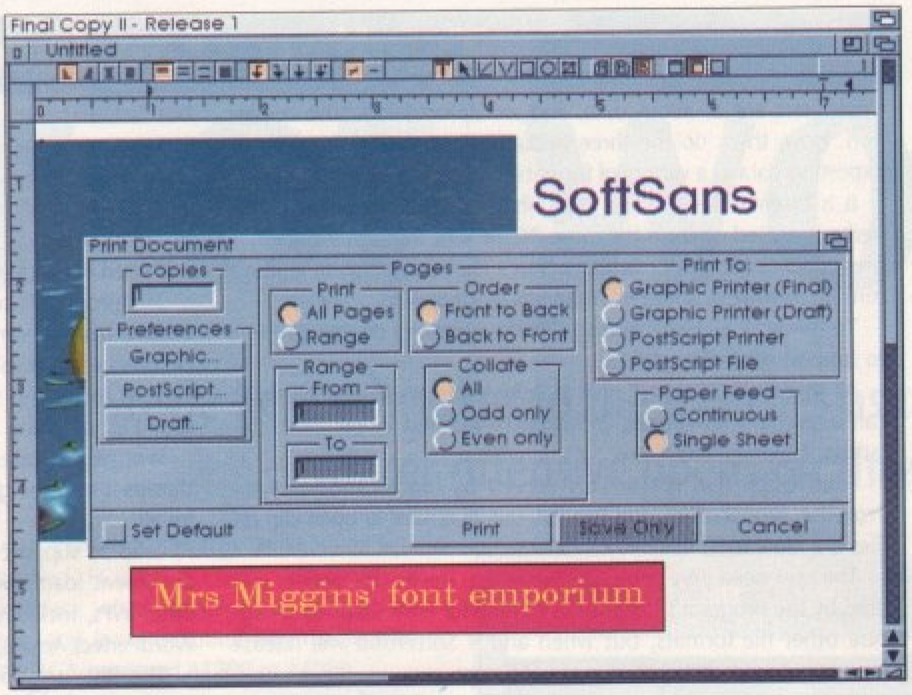
Text handling is another story. ProWrite is a fully-fledged wordprocessor with its emphasis firmly on the words, and this shows as soon as serious word crunching starts.

The program has several powerful features not found in FCII and one or two which Wordworth 2 can't match. In particular, I liked the Retain/Apply option, which enables the user to choose the format or style from a block of text, then apply it to another block.

The usefulness of this feature when using large documents cannot be underestimated. Not as powerful as FCII's style tags, perhaps, but more flexible in use.

There are also several text formatting commands, such as the column break and variable undo functions which, though less glamorous than full AGA support, become essential in the user's document creation.

Without such seemingly tiddly extras the job of the writer can become tiresome, and it is the mark of a true wordprocessor that this kind of feature is available.



Final Copy II's excellent print requester in action

Text routing may be simple vertical flow from one to another or may be set to "snake" horizontally, useful for pages broken up by centrally located pictures, and a bookmark may be placed at any point to facilitate rapid movement from one part of a document to another.

Unfortunately, only one bookmark per document may be placed, which limits this feature's usefulness.

In reply to the master page system used by FCII, ProWrite 3.3 enables the user to set different headers and footers for odd and even pages, essential for multiple page documents printed on double-sided pages.

The master page system is more flexible in that it makes possible the production of graphic folios such as the *AC* symbol used on most *Amiga Computing* pages, but odd/even headers and footers are better than nothing. When spell checking a finished document, ProWrite can mix it with the best of them utilis[ing] its 100,000 word dictionary and thesau[rus] with300,000cross-references.

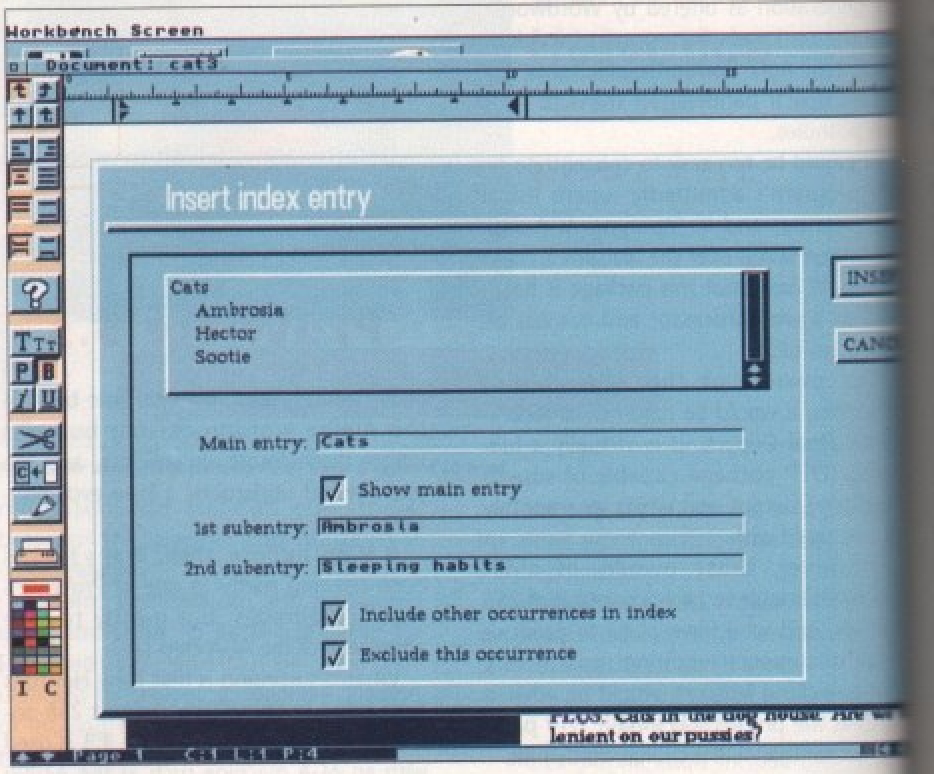
Cross-matching

Checking is fast, efficient, and accura[te] and the thesaurus has a more than ade[-] quate system for cross-matching nou[ns] adjectives and adverbs.

A pleasant feature, given that this is a[n] American product, is the dictionar[y's] acceptance of British spellings such a[s] colour and labour.

The only distinguishing feature of th[e] spell checker is its capacity to check th[e] spelling of words as they're typed.

While a pain in the neck at times, th[e] option to have the machine beep an[d] flash every time a word is spelled wrong [is] ideal for young children. Being forced [to] stop and retype a word until it is spel[led] correctly is more conducive to learnin[g] than having a checker whizz through th[e]



Wordworth 2 shows off one of it's powerful new document features

If you can't stand the heat...

The term "hot links" has become something of a buzzword since the release of SoftLogik's HotLinks package stirred the Amiga world to consider its lack of a dynamic data exchange (DDE) system similar to that used in Windows 3.1.

Dynamic Data Exchange is the process where a program creates a hot link for a graphic or a block of text, then monitors it for changes.

In effect, a hot linked graphic is placed only temporarily in a document, the package remembers where it came from, and if changes have been made since it was last used, the new version is used.

All three title contenders make their own attempts to meet DDE needs, though only ProWrite implements the SofLogik system. Final Copy II and Wordworth 2 make use of Workbench 2.0x links, enabling the user to save the link to a graphic rather than the graphic.

Final Copy II uses hot links alone, which automatically update a picture as it is changed, while Wordworth offers a more flexible choice between cool links and hot links.

A cool link simply creates the link, then waits until the document is loaded at a future date before showing the changes onscreen. ProWrite takes a much more thorough approach by completely supporting the SoftLogik HotLinks standard. For a ful[l] review of this package, see *AC*'s passim, but suffice to say it works with both bitmap graphics and text, enables ProWrite to "publish" text for use in, say, a DTP program or "subscribe" to text and graphics created elsewhere.

All updates take place simultaneously if both the subscriber – for example ProWrite – and the publisher (DPaint) are running, or at loading time if a document contains HotLinked text or graphics which have been changed since the last session.

HotLinks has a much more sophisticated approach to hot linking than the Workbench alternative, but it has the disadvantage of being useless in the ProWrite context unless the user also purchases the system itself from SoftLogik.

The major advantage for Workbench hot links is that they are simple links to any type of graphic the package can import. Thus, Wordworth 2 users will be able to hot link a ProDraw clip, a PCX, BMP, or even a 24-bit file for editing in Art Department Professional (ADPro won't load EPS files - only save them).

Final Copy II users, until the program improves in the import department, will at least be able to edit IFFs, including the 256-colour and HAM8 varieties, if they have DPaint IV AGA or ADPro.

mistakes at the end of the document.

Overall, ProWrite has continued its tradition of being the Amiga's most consistently "almost there" product. It is perfectly capable of most wordprocessing tasks and has excellent PostScript support.

However, with its failure to properly support AGA and its lack of some features found in Wordworth 2, it will be a second choice for most users this side of the Atlantic.

As a counterbalance, ProWrite can offer a long history of stable performance on all Amiga models and a regular upgrade policy.

If the consistent New Horizons support in the past is anything to go by, this is not a program which will be left behind by new developments.

Wordworth v2

Since its release last year, Wordworth has enjoyed its fair share of success, due mostly to a combination of full wysiwyg screen display, excellent font and printer support, and solid wordprocessor features.

The latest release builds on what was an already sound base by adding many new features without losing the original's concentration on power.

Like ProWrite 3.3, Wordworth 2 will import 256-colour and HAM8 graphics, but will not display them on-screen in full colour. The program has support for a 256-colour palette, but Digita claim to have received their AGA machines too late for the WW2 launch.

Plans are afoot to release a free upgrade disk to users as soon as the new graphics formats can be fully implemented, at which time Wordworth should look as good as Final Copy II does now.

> *"In common with ProWrite, WW2 cannot offer FCII's line drawing tools"*

Graphics flexibility in WW2 is aided enormously by its import options, which include not only all IFF formats, but ProDraw clip art, Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), and the PC bitmap formats PCX and BMP. Neither ProWrite nor Final Copy can handle this variety of graphics.

Once on-screen, graphics can be repositioned and re-sized as normal, though there is no crop function as in FCII. Screen update, when moving or scaling a picture, is faster than ProWrite, slower than Final Copy, but at all times acceptable on faster machines.

In common with ProWrite, WW2 cannot offer FCII's line drawing tools, though its and ProWrite's acceptance of previously created clip art will offset this to a degree.

Textually, Wordworth 2 is far and away the best of the three packages on test. Not only does the program support more font standards than FCII (which has support only for its own type), WW2 is supplied with two disks containing 17 official Agfa CompuGraphic typefaces, and will also use the Adobe Type 1 fonts built in to the standard PostScript laser printers.

File conversion utilities are available in shareware to convert Adobe fonts to Agfa standard, and a goodly selection of Agfa-compatible fonts is available from our advertisers (see under DTP in the Locator), so Wordworth users should have no problems when expanding their font libraries.

ProWrite users will also benefit from the ready availability of new CompuGraphic fonts, but with only seven typefaces shipped as standard, ProWrite suffers typographically.

Printer drivers

Wordworth's usual printer drivers are supplied with the package, which enable the user to choose from a long list of popular printers, install the correct printer driver and printer fonts, then use the fonts directly from within a document.

In total, WW2's support for printers is of a far higher standard than either ProWrite or FCII.

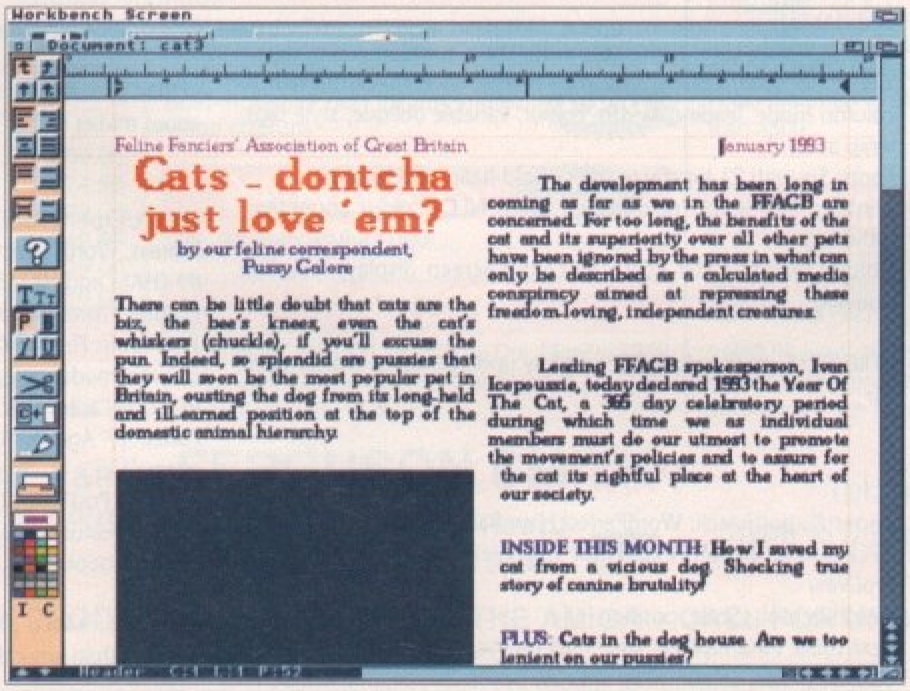
My one gripe with font handling is that although WW2 includes Agfa's Intellifont technology, screen representations of fonts, both Agfa and others, can be less than perfect.

At sizes below 12 point, the type becomes almost unreadable, especially when using the PostScript printer driver and its internal fonts.

These are displayed using fairly crude one-size bitmaps, which distort badly when used at low or high type sizes.

Quick Screen mode will show printer effects such as bold and so on, but use a standard Amiga font such as Topaz for screen fonts, and this can be used to increase speed or enable the typing of, say, 9-point text. However, with a wysiwyg wordprocessor, I would have expected better screen fonts.

Having said this, ProWrite is no better in the screen font department, its own fonts appearing scrunched and eye-watering at lower point sizes.



EPS files can be imported, but appear as solid black boxes

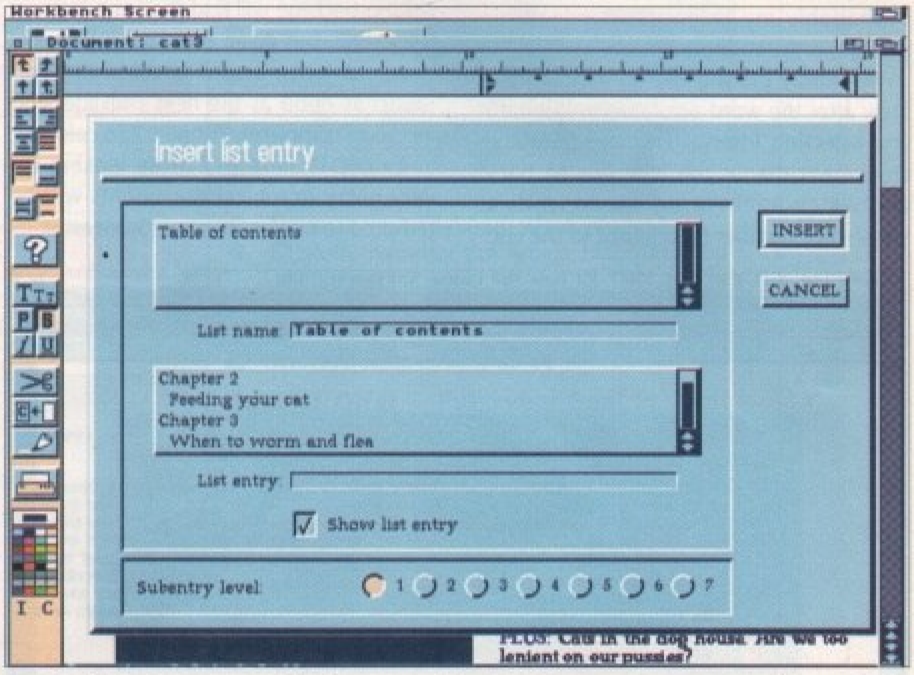
Printing presses

Final Copy II scores highly in print tests, and has one of the most comprehensive printing preferences requester of any Amiga wordprocessor.

Graphic density and greyscale threshold can be set, RGB colour correction and halftone or ordered dithering is available, and page orientation (PostScript only) can be toggled between landscape and portrait.

The only major omission is the option to print a page at less than 100 per cent size, vital when proofing a page whose final destination will be a PostScript printing bureau, but whose dimensions make it impossible to fit onto an A4 page.

Wordworth and ProWrite both offer these options, and have full PostScript support. Initial tests with the office Laserwriter II NTX and a very expensive Phaser III PXi colour laser printer suggest that Final Copy's output has a slight edge over the other packages, but there is little in it.



Wordworth 2 can generate a table of contents with ease

Final Copy II scores well here with its screen magnification option, enabling users to zoom in up to 400 per cent, but this can be a slow process when IFFs are on screen.

Having perused the program's wysiwyg features, the WW2 user will quickly find when he or she moves on to large document creation, that Wordworth has several superb professional wordprocessor features which elevate it above its competitors on the power curve.

Automatic index and list creation will do for a start. Index generation makes it possible for users to highlight any word in a document and include it in an index to be appended to the finished article.

What's more, the process enables sub-items to be indented below the main entry complete with their own page numbers.

Index generation

For example, one could index Amiga as the main entry, then trawl through a document indexing every occurrence of A1200 or A4000 as sub-items.

The resulting index will have an entry under A for Amiga with the sub-items showing all pages where the text A1200 or A4000 occurred.

Added flexibility is included in that users can choose to de-select certain occurrences of an index entry or choose whether or not all occurrences will be listed.

Authors of large documents will find this feature invaluable and it is in itself a reason for students to type their dissertations on Wordworth 2.

Lists are more or less simpler indexes, and may be used to create a table of contents or list of illustrations.

Strangely, though indexes cater for only two levels of sub-entry, lists can be created with up to seven levels of indentation, allowing for chapters, sections, paragraphs, and so on. I wouldn't like to put this to the test, but I fancy WW2's list generator could be used to produce a ➤

table of contents for the average mortgage agreement.

Bookmarks are also included and are more flexible than in ProWrite. The author can create as many bookmarks as required to make flicking back and forward through a long document as easy as possible.

Endnote

Markers for chapters or indented quotes, or other places of interest such as the location of an illustration to be imported before the finished document is printed make any WW2 user's life immeasurably easier.

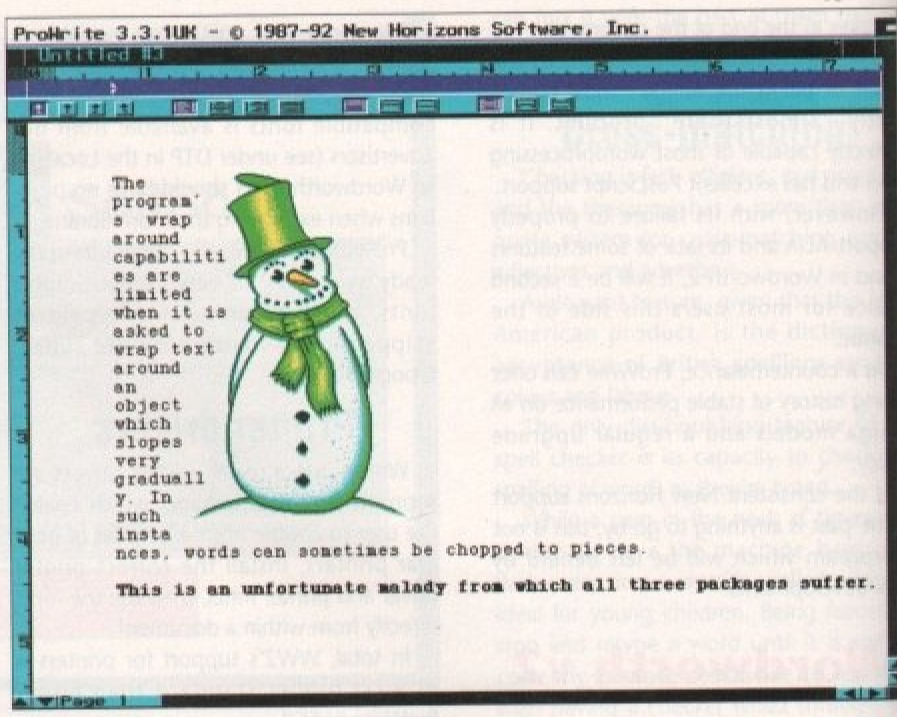
Probably my favourite new feature, though, is the endnote option.

By simply placing the cursor immediately after the word or phrase in question and selecting Insert... Endnote from the Document menu, the user can sit back and watch as the program appends a superscript number then jumps to the end of the document to type the same number.

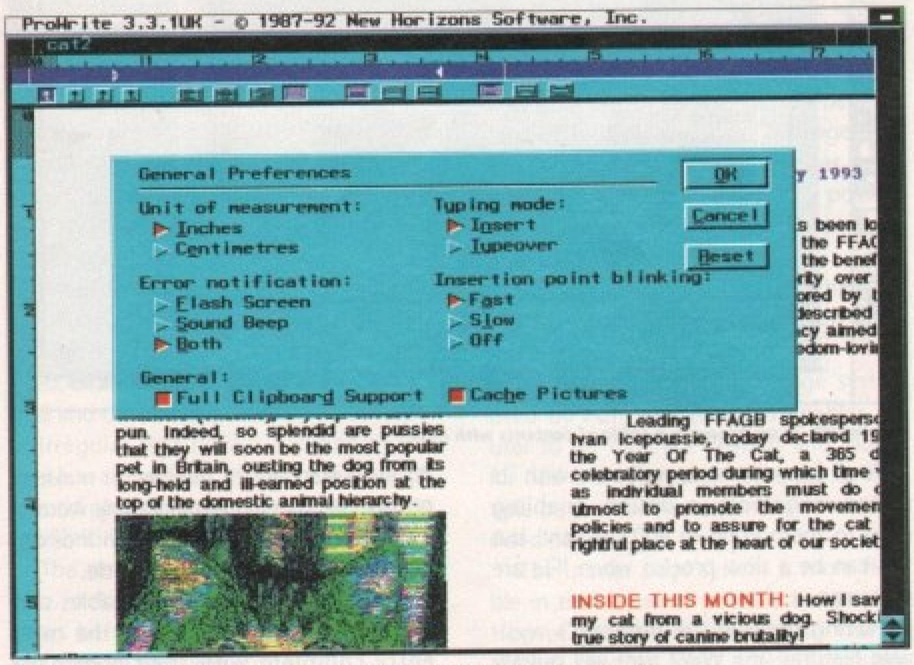
All the user need now do is insert whatever note is required. Notes are automatically re-numbered if another is inserted above existing notes, and if the note is later removed in the main document, its attendant endnote entry is removed from the list. In conjunction with the index, list, and bookmark options this feature makes Wordworth the only choice for authors of professional, business, or legal documents, and certainly the only package worth considering for student uses such as dissertations, theses, and longer essays.

Home users looking for a good letter-writing package will find the extra features less useful, but given that Wordworth has excellent fonts, a spell checker and thesaurus as good as the next package, and will soon completely support 256 colours.

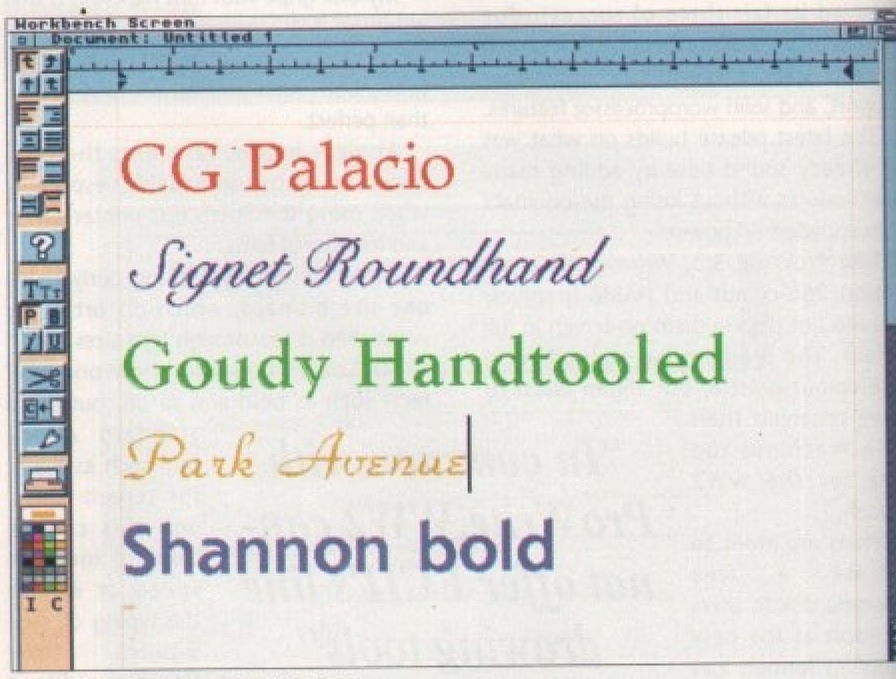
Only DTP fans and those looking for very glitzy graphical documents will be tempted to buy another wordprocessor.



Irregular text flow is a problem for all these packages



ProWrite 33's preferences screen is not as comprehensive as Wordworth's



Some of Wordworth's superb Agfa fonts

Product information

Final Copy II
Supplier: Gordon Harwood Ltd
Phone: 0773 836781
Price: £99.95

ProWrite 3.3
Supplier: Silica Systems
Phone: 081- 093 1111
Price: £TBA

Wordworth v2
Supplier: Digita International
Phone: 0395 270273
Price: £129.99

Those features in brief

Final Copy II

Import/Export: Ascii, WordPerfect, ProWrite, Pen Pal, IFF (HAM and HAM8)
Graphics tools: Line, circle, box, crop, scale, position
Text tools: Find/replace, sort, mail merge, spell check, thesaurus, column mode, leading, width, colour, variable oblique, style tags, wrap around.
Fonts: Six with 21 typefaces (bold, bold-italic, and so on)
Printing: PostScript (colour/bw), draft, NLQ, colour correction, dithering
Unique features: Full AGA 256-colour screen display, fast, line drawing

VERDICT: Superb colour DTP, slightly underpowered wordprocessor

ProWrite 3.3

Import/Export: Ascii, WordPerfect, Pen Pal, KindWords, TextCraft, excellence, BeckerText, Final Copy, IFF (HAM and HAM8), ProDraw
Graphics tools: Scale, position
Text tools: Find/replace, sort, mail merge, spell check, thesaurus, column mode, colour, wrap around, bookmark, column break
Fonts: Five with seven typefaces (wide and normal)
Printing: PostScript (colour/bw), draft, NLQ
Unique features: Spell check while typing, speak text, Retain/Apply style/format

VERDICT: Powerful wordprocessor with good features that just about makes it

Wordworth 2

Import/Export: Ascii, WordPerfect, Pen Pal, KindWords, ProWrite, Protext, WordPerfect MSDOS; MS Word MSDOS, Windows Write, IFF (HAM and HAM8), ProDraw, EPS, PCX, BMP
Graphics tools: Scale, position
Text tools: Find/replace, sort, mail merge, spell check, thesaurus, column mode, colour, wrap around, bookmark, endnotes, automatic list, automatic index, glossary, column break
Fonts: 17 Agfa fonts with 68 typefaces (bold, italic, bold-italic, normal)
Printing: PostScript (colour/bw), draft, NLQ, high quality
Unique features: Automatic list and index generation, endnotes, multiple bookmarks, fonts and printer options

VERDICT: More powerful than the competition with more features than any other package except Protext

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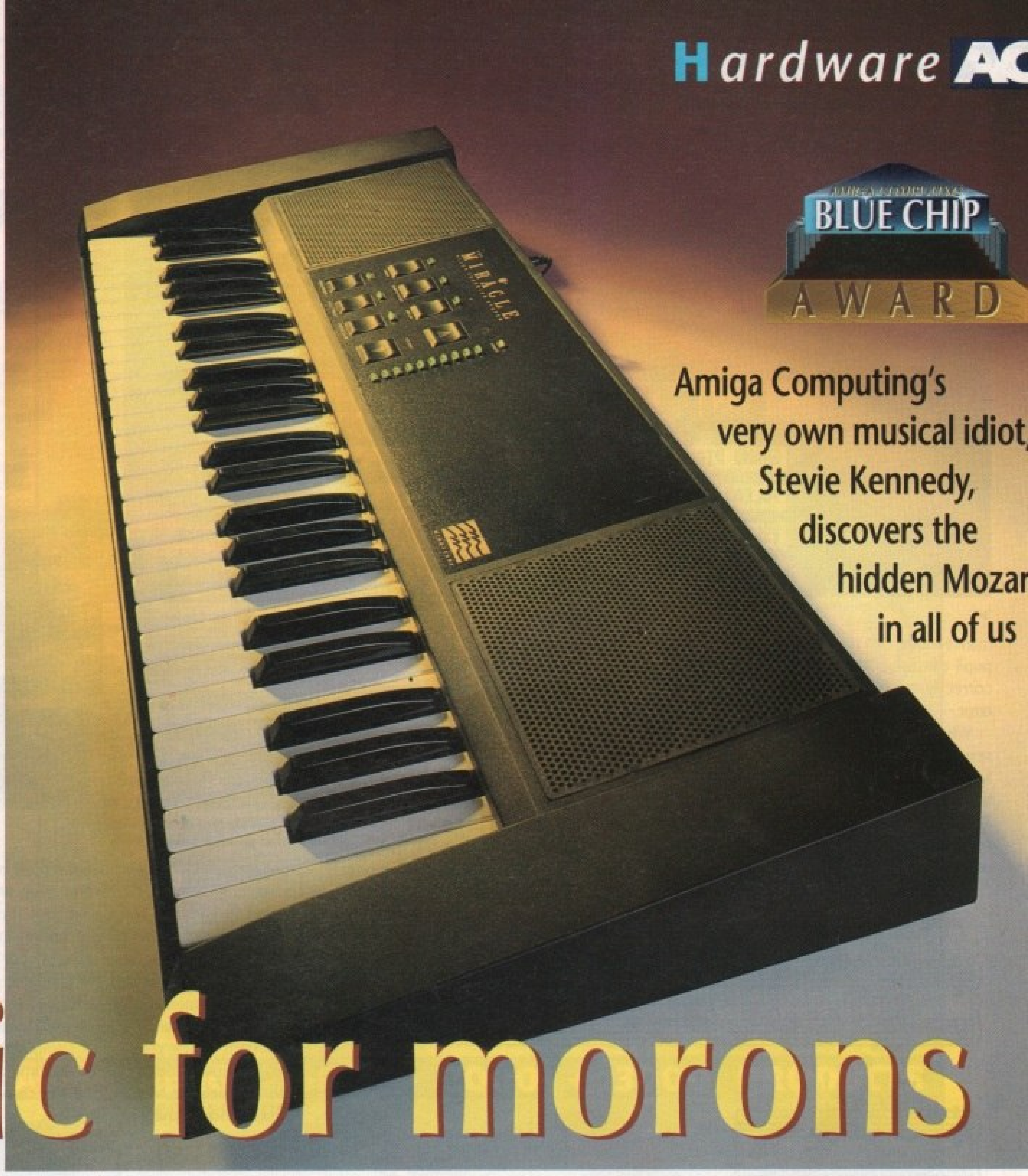
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BLUE CHIP AWARD

Amiga Computing's very own musical idiot, Stevie Kennedy, discovers the hidden Mozart in all of us

Music for morons

I've always been suspicious of so-called miraculous musical tuition courses since the days when, Les Paul copy in hand, I struggled and failed to master the arcane art of playing Stairway To Heaven with the help of a dodgy fingering diagram and a play-along-a-Max flexi-disc.

It was with a certain amount of cynicism, therefore, that I approached Midscape's Miracle keyboard tutor. If the marketing blurb was to be believed, I would be playing the piano in three weeks and reading sheet music "within weeks".

Apprenticeship

Now, it's a well known fact that "weeks" plural can mean anything up to ten years (520 "weeks") and beyond, but the hinted at three week time period for my keyboard apprenticeship was a definite figure I could get my doubting teeth into. This in mind, I scrounged a keyboard and sat back grinning smugly, fully anticipating another reality gap between marketing claim and cold truth.

Five minutes following the simple installation procedure and a few hours at the ivories was enough to turn cynicism into astonishment as my first rendition of Dvorak's *Largo* (the Hovis tune to you and me), complete with left hand chord changes, floated serenely from the Miracle's stereo speakers. I sat back with a grin which had been magically transformed from smug cynicism to gloating pleasure.

Miracle is a hardware and software double act combining a standard 49-key keyboard and software written by the Blue Ribbon Soundworks people. At the heart of the system is a simple cable connecting the keyboard to the Amiga's serial port and three disks' worth of extremely clever software.

When the user strikes a key on the Miracle's pressure-sensitive keyboard, a signal is passed down the connecting cable to the software, which displays the key press in graphic form using an on-screen keyboard. Data transfer is virutally instantaneous, and as the user progresses from the first sections detailing proper keyboard posture and how to use Miracle to the lessons themselves, the software begins to show just how central this interaction is to its operation.

Over 40 types of error are checked for, grouped into seven categories, and two phrase banks are used to generate reports on the user's performance. This means that messages coming from the "tutor" to the pupil are varied and tailored to each individual performance, with the result that the Miracle owner has, in effect, a captive piano tutor in a box.
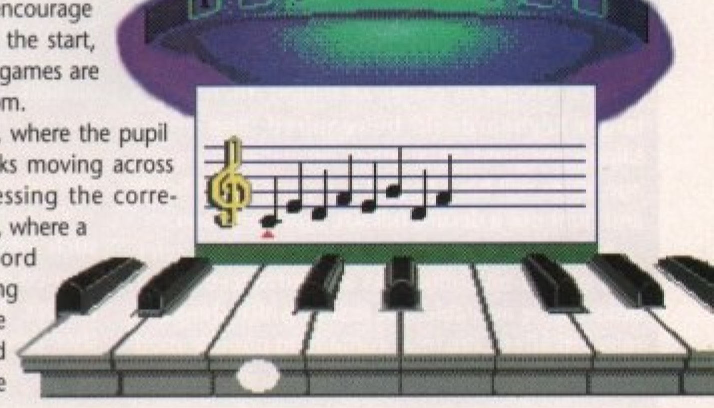
Hypertext is used for most reports and information screen, making it possible for the user to simply click on the word "Beethoven" for example to summon a screen of information. All musical terms used have their own hypertext screens, so the software can be very educational in the more traditional music education sense.

Fingering

Lessons are grouped into chapters, each dealing with one complete tune, and start with a blackboard containing details of the phrase, chord, or notes about to be practiced. When first introduced, all new notes are indicated on the keyboard using fingering numbers to encourage correct technique from the start, and a variety of tuition games are used to stave off boredom.

These include Ducks, where the pupil attempts to shoot ducks moving across musical staves by pressing the corresponding key, Ripchord, where a correctly fingered chord results in the safe landing of parachutists (failure can be messy), and Aliens, where one attempts to follow a sequence of notes played by a Close Encounters-like flying saucer. Better still, though, is hesitation mode.

Where everyone begins, hesitation mode is used to display a piece of music in standard notation but without the metronome and with a box outlining the next note to be played. The user then plays at his or her pace until confident with the tune. Miracle will not move on to perfor- ➤



Aliens is one game designed to make learning fun

MIDI options

Miracle is basically a MIDI keyboard, so it can of course be used in conjunction with any MIDI sequencing package and MIDI interface . However, as the Miracle software is written by Blue Ribbon Soundworks, Bars and Pipes Professional is particularly useful.

This top end Amiga sequencer has a Miracle keyboard driver as standard, and selecting Miracle during Bars and Pipes installation will enable the user to directly address the Miracle's patches by name rather than MIDI patch number.

No MIDI connector is required when using Bars and Pipes, as the driver software will utilise Miracle's serial connector. It's difficult to imagine anyone buying Bars and Pipes Professional without also paying the £20 or so for a MIDI interface, but the feature is a useful one nonetheless.



Record your own creations with the help of miracle's own track recorder

The big night

What can you do once you've started to find your feet (or fingers) and wish to expand your musical horizons? Miracle can be an excellent tutor, but will it keep you occupied once Jingle Bells begins to drive you mad?

Although there are 40 chapters in the Miracle learning curve, each based on one song, there are in fact hundreds of songs available on the disks supplied with every keyboard. These range from *America* (using the same tune as our national anthem) to John Lennon's *Yesterday* and the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*, and any one of them can be loaded by the user.

By simply going to the practice room, the user is presented with a file requester and, once a song is chosen, with a range of practice options. He or she can choose to practice right, left, or both hands, rhythm, the notes themselves (as in hesitation mode), play a solo with the metronome, or a duet with another computer-controlled pianist.

Once happy with the song, popping into the performance hall enables practice with a full orchestral backing, which will be in a style to suit the piece. At this point, the warm glow of satisfaction from having practised a song to performance standard without the help of the tutorial is not to be underestimated..

mance mode with the metronome until the pupil can finger the melody more or less correctly, so there's plenty of room for error.

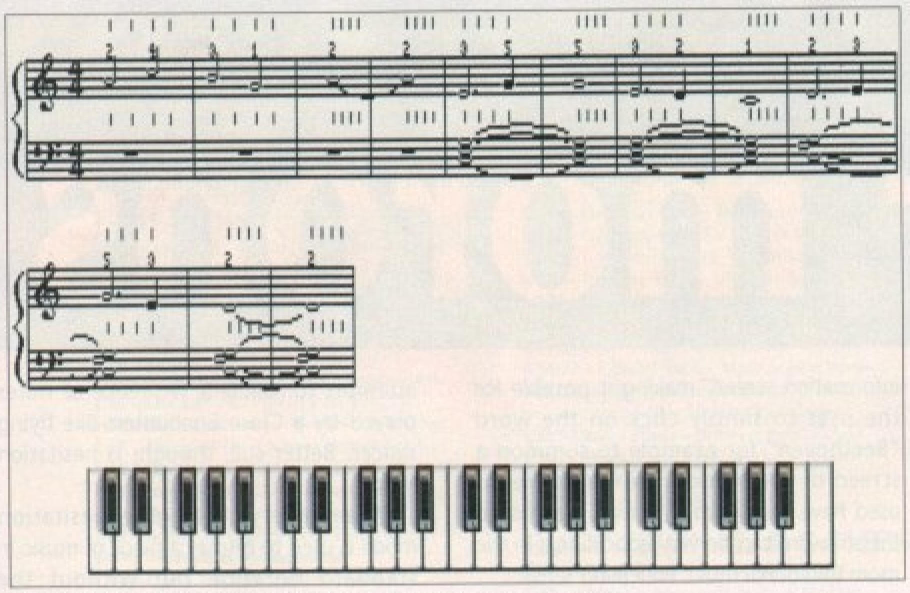
When errors begin to multiply, representing a basic and repetitive failing, Miracle will skip backwards to simple one-handed practice or to rhythm-only mode. The really clever bit, though, is that the software can tell exactly what is going wrong.

If the user continually messes up a chord change or can't get a handle on quarter notes, Miracle's musical brain will sort out what's going wrong and devise a lesson to remedy it. This can range from right handed melody practice, to left-handed chord changes, or even a trip back to the duck shooting range. The latter is particularly humiliating for the budding keyboard jockey and prompts my only criticism of the software – it can be very



The friendly face of Miracle tuition greeting users by name

picky. Very picky, that is, when the pupil is consistently fingering the wrong note, or coming in early on an upbeat, but the built-in "near enough will do" approach compensates for this when a nearly correct performance is acceptable enough to allow advancement to a new lesson. The authors have obviously given a great deal of thought to the problem of computers having a much more finicky ear for timing than the average human, and the compromise works admirably.



The Hovis tune in all its music sheet glory. If I can play it, so can you

Evaluation

At no time during my own lessons did I have cause to complain about the software's evaluation of my progress. I did, of course, swear vociferously at the machine when it asked me yet again to go through the fourth measure (it could have been the fifth measure) of *Largo* and get that chord change just right, but the machine was correct and I eventually mastered it properly instead of in the cobbled-up fashion I would have found acceptable.

In less than three days of fairly intensive practice (I couldn't be dragged away from it once I'd discovered how much fun it was), I progressed from being unable even to play *Chopsticks* to playing a tune with both hands involving three chords and a tricky thrice-in-one-measure chord sequence. As far as I was concerned, the last note fading away to the accompaniment of rhythmic banging from my irritated neighbours at one in the morning, Miracle had lived up to its name in no uncertain fashion.

For the parent or teacher, never mind the thousands of us harbouring old dreams of musical success, Miracle is one of the most educational and enjoyable pieces of hardware yet released for the Amiga. Its simple design, superb software, and open ended potential for add-on disks, MIDI sequencing and so on, would make it a good buy at the price even before the cost of piano lessons was taken into account.

Value

When the £10+ per hour fees, multiplied by one to two years and possibly more than one child are calculated, Miracle shines as much on its value for money merits as it does on its musical and technical abilities. This product is already a success on the PC and Nintendo systems and can hardly fail to be a big hit on the Amiga.

Now then ... was that a G7 or a suspended C? And how many times do I have to practice that triplet with octave stretch?

Future proof?

Budding pianists will be able to progress with Miracle as far as about grade four in standard piano tuition terms, but at this point the 49-key limit will be reached.

A full piano keyboard covers at least six octaves, while the Miracle can handle only four. For the advanced stages of tuition, therefore, a larger keyboard will be required, and unless Mindscape produce another version of the package, users will have to part company with Miracle and hunt out a decent full size synth or piano.

Before this stage is reached, however, a selection of add-on song disks and advanced lesson disks will be available, the first of which should be released after Christmas containing popular modern songs by Madonna and others. In addition, the miracle manual makes every attempt to point pupils in the right direction.

Suggestions are included concerning the best places to go in search of a decent professional tutor, which artists to listen to for keyboard ideas, and even what sheet music to opt for. The authors make no bones about Miracle's beginner status and recommend that ambitious users study musical theory and technique with a qualified tutor.

Of course, by the time the user moves on to such advanced tuition, Miracle will have performed its task, and may have been developed further. Mindscape say they are looking at further developing the whole system, so keep an eye on our updates column for the latest news.

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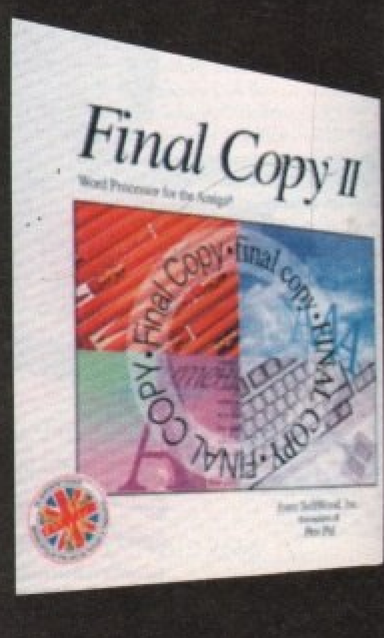
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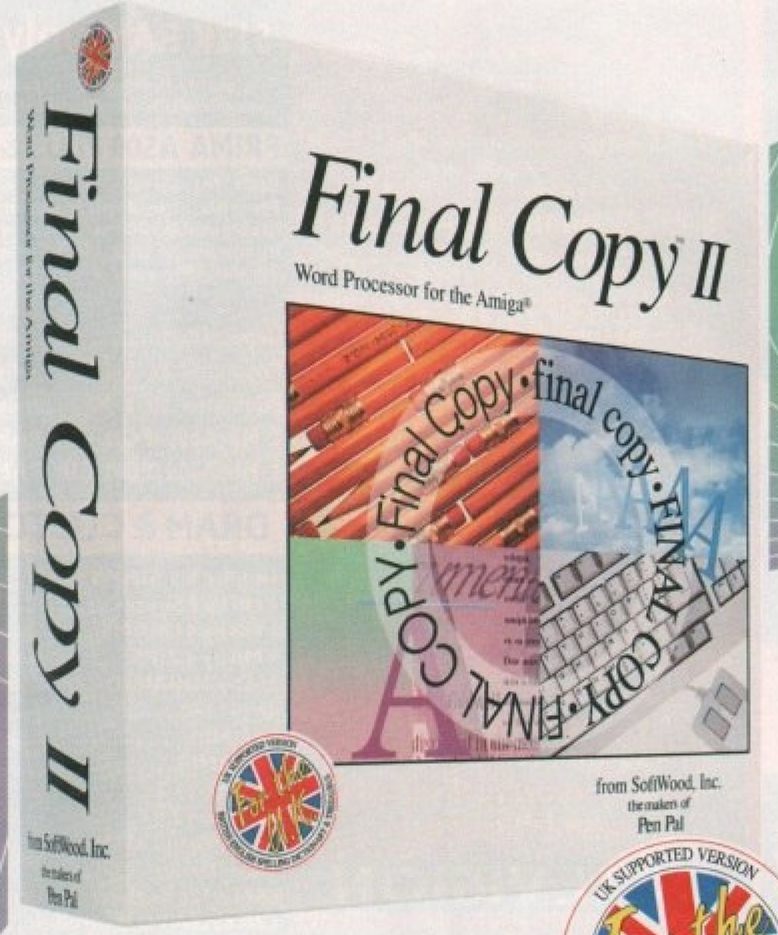
...in Word Processing with Perfect Printing

From the makers of Pen Pal comes a brand new, unique WYSIWYG Word Processing package, that's simply the only choice for those who demand the most from their Amiga.

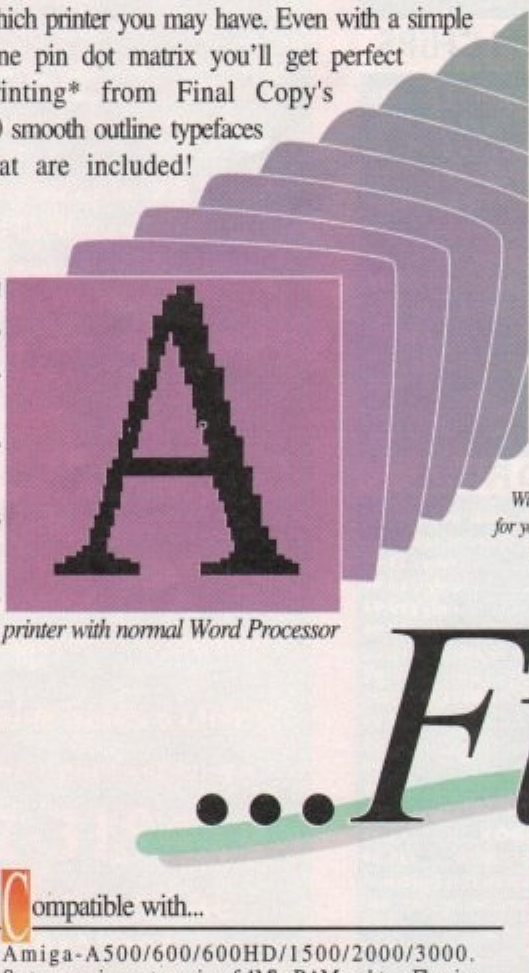
Final Copy II is not only the Amiga's most powerful Word Processor with every feature you'd expect - plus many more found normally in DTP packages - but also the only Word Processor that gives superb scaleable outline fonts from *any* Amiga - even 1.3's. Imagine outputting to your printers highest resolution, with almost Postscript™ laser perfection - no matter which printer you may have. Even with a simple nine pin dot matrix you'll get perfect printing* from Final Copy's 20 smooth outline typefaces that are included!



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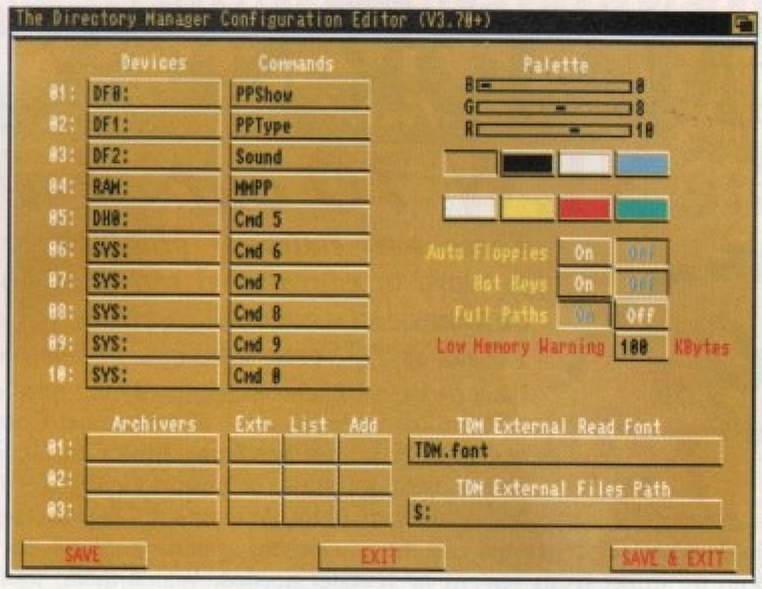
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AMS

WorkStation 2 SUPPORT

An in-depth guide for WorkStation 2 users to operating and customising TDM

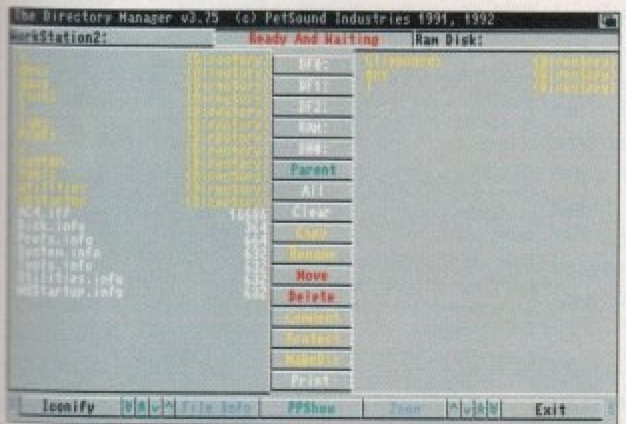


Make TDM all your own by adding extra options in seconds

Before we delve into TDM's configuration editor, a brief tour of the program's more subtle features is in order. Perhaps the first and most vital port of call is TDM's attendant help files which instantly leap to your aid if confusion or disaster strikes.

If you hold down the right mouse button and move to the TDM Utilities menu all will be revealed – simply release the button on Help or alternatively hit H on the keyboard to execute the built in hotkey command. When the requester appears simply click on the subject of your choice.

If you then exit the Help system and move to the central device list another hidden feature will be revealed. At present the list will read "DF0:, DF1:, DF2:, RAM:" and so on. If you move the pointer to the top of the list and click just above the first device the selection will toggle to an additional five device names.



The familiar face of TDM that make the CLI a thing of the past

At present all of the additional devices will read simply SYS:. Later in the article I'll explain how to configure these extra source devices to suit your specific system.

If you now move to the bottom of the screen we'll run through the options available on the lower control strip. Some of the features are fairly self explanatory, such as Iconify and the arrow gadgets, while others are slightly more mysterious.

To apply the File Info option simply select a file – denoted by an arrow alongside the filename – then hit the File Info button.

This is particularly useful when applied to directories as they can be scanned to reveal their total size – extremely useful when copying large amounts of data from disk to another.

Alongside the file info lurks the essential command button. Before you click on the button itself first run through numbers 1 to 4 on the keyboard – this will reveal the built-in commands already configured to work with TDM.

Within the TDMConEd section I'll explain how to add additional commands of your own, but for how simply list the WorkStation 2 disk and highlight the file entitled AC.IFF.

Now press 1 on the keyboard and click on the command button. TDM will now use an external IFF viewer and display the *AC* backdrop image.

To the right of the command button you'll see the Zoom option. This is used to provide detailed information on the contents of specific drives or directories. From here you can examine the state of protection bits, comments, creation dates and so on.

Now exit the Zoom option and either select the TDMConEd from the TDM main screen or alternatively return to the WorkStation 2 main screen, highlighting the general pull-down and releasing on TDM Config.

TDM Configuration Editor (TDMConEd)

Device gadgets

We'll start the editing extravaganza with the ten Device gadgets on the upper left. In this areas you can add or modify the devices you wish to appear in the devices section of the central control panel.

To add or change a name, simply click in the box and add the appropriate sting. When you return to the TDM main screen the new device will be ready and waiting.

Commands gadgets

In this area you can add or modify the commands that appear in the External gadget in the lower centre of the screen. These commands must be in the C: directory or alternatively have a path assigned. For example:

```
DF1:Utils/Medplayer
```

Archivers gadgets (19 characters max)

In this area you can add the archivers you want to employ when you press the letter V within TDM. These commands must be in C: if no paths are defined.

To discover the required syntax for your particular archiver copy it into your C: directory, open a shell and type its filename. At this point a list of commands should appear which can then be added to the Extract, List and Add gadgets.

Auto Floppy Directories

Selection of this mode (on or off) will cause TDM to automatically load a directory when a floppy is placed in one of the floppy drives. This will only take effect if either of the display windows contain the appropriate drive as the directory listing.

Hot Keys

This function allows you to switch the hot key function on or off. When set to the off it doesn't mean the hot key operation is totally disabled, it simply means that a key combination of the right Amiga and the key letter needs to be depressed simultaneously.

Full Paths

If you wish to have the FULL path displayed in the source window for the directory you are currently using (ie: C: would be displayed as Bench:C/ in my case), then select this option. If you select off, then the display will show what you type.

Palette gadgets

To edit one of the Screen Colours, simply click on one of the boxes containing the colour you wish to edit. You can then use the sliders marked R, G or B to adjust that colour as required.

TDM External Files Path

To give you more freedom in using TDM, you can tell it to load the TDMConEd and TDMHelp programs from wherever you like. This feature has already been implemented for you, but feel free to move the files and reset the path if you wish.

The External files path offers an excellent opportunity to free some space on the disk. You could copy both files onto a separate disk and then use the path name to access them when required, for example:

```
DF1:TDMStuff/
```

This would simply instruct TDM to look for the TDMStuff draw on drive DF1 while searching for help files and the TDMConEd program. Moving both files instantly frees over 60k of valuable disk space allowing you to add even more utilities to the system.

TDM External Read Font

You can now define the font you wish to use for reading files within the Readfile option of TDM. Simply type in the name of the font you wish to use and press Return.

You do not have to type .font at the end, as TDMConEd will automatically do this, however, if you do, TDMConEd will not add it.

Minimum Memory

This option has come about so as to give you warning when your system is becoming low on memory. You may enter any value between 50k (50,000 bytes) and 500k (500,000 bytes) as your warning level. This must be entered in k rather than bytes.

For all 32-bit Acorn home computers, Commodore Amiga and IBM PC /compatibles

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE for JUNIOR to GCSE

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John : Achievement Record 10/10 Mathematics (Number - AT2)

SUBJECT	Carnival	Cover Up	Big Bang	Grab It!	Silicon	Cheers
Addition	2a.1	4a.4	3a.3	4a.6		2b.1
Subtraction		3a.4	2a.2	4a.5	2b.2	
Multiplication	4a.2	3b.1	5a.3	3b.2	7b.3	4a.14
Division	3c.2	4a.10	5a.4	7a.2	4d.4	
Fractions		6a.4			5b.1	8b.2
Decimals	6a.5		6a.9			
Percents	5b.2	6a.10	6a.8			
Estimation	8c.1			6b.1		3d.2
Units				3e.1	3e.3	5d.1
Powers					8a.1	5d.4

AT2 Level 4a.2 (i) Multiplication facts up to 10 x 10

*The achievement record shows the subjects covered together with the child's progress: Red: Help needed, Yellow: Practice needed, Green: **10 out of 10**!*

10 out of 10 MATHS (Number)

The Mathematics National Curriculum is split into five Attainment Targets. The Maths (Number) *10 out of 10* suite of programs is aimed to cover some essential parts of the Levels set out in Attainment Target 2. The package covers many topics from all Key Stages but the ten specific areas built into the design are listed below:

- Addition
- Subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division
- Fractions
- Decimals
- Percentages
- Estimation
- Units
- Powers

Carnival: A great shoot-'em-up that checks number skills along with fire power. Various speeds challenge novice to arcade expert.

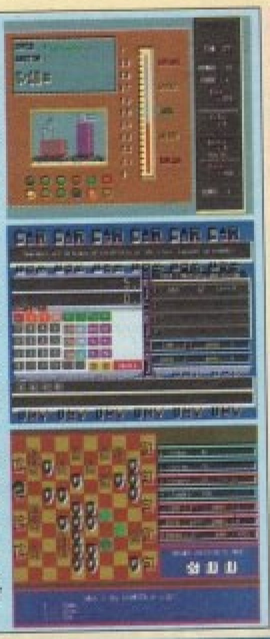
Grab It: Find and grab answers quickly in this fast-action game. It's a great way to practice number skills from tables to estimation.

The Big Bang: Keep cool and answer quick for high scores – an exercise in scale reading as well as arithmetic.

Cover Up: A challenging game to really get children thinking. It's a real game of strategy – especially in the multi-player modes.

Silicon Brain: A fun calculator practice game with key presses displayed on-screen to let you look back if answers are incorrect.

Cheers: A unique quiz game that will keep everyone on their toes. Use any of the six graded sets of questions or compile your own.



10 out of 10 ENGLISH

10 out of 10 English is designed around the National Curriculum for English and aims to reinforce the traditional values of the language. With its unique automatic assessment system the package covers many topics from all key stages but particular emphasis is placed on the following ten critical topics:

- Spelling
- Words
- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Language use
- Punctuation
- Pairs
- Sound patterns
- Figures of speech

Sniper: A chance for children to prove they know – or learn – some common sayings as they shoot the target words.

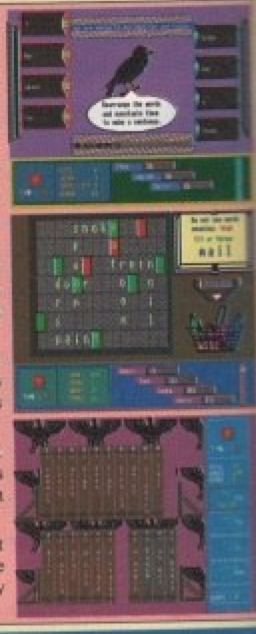
Cover Up: Vocabulary and spelling are just two of the skills exercised in this challenging game of strategy.

WordFit: Crosswords, board games and word power combine as children fit the correct words in to the grid.

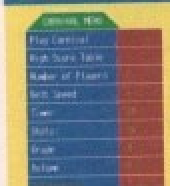
Grab It: Spelling, punctuation and many other important skills are practised and learnt in this fast-action game.

Librarian: Move the mouse fast and re-arrange the books! There's plenty of sorting and matching in this novel new game.

Cheers: The quiz game that children – and the rest of the family – can learn from as they move up and down the board.

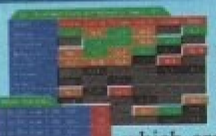


FULL MARKS FOR TOP OF THE CLASS SOFTWARE



Extensive in-game Options

Not only can the educational level of the games be chosen, speed of play, game length and many other options can be set to tailor the programs to your child's skill level at the game. This means the games can be set to suit anyone from novice to arcade expert – it keeps interest longer and increases personal challenge.



Dual Scoring System

High percentages change the colours of the achievement chart while good gameplay – combined with high marks – give scores which are recorded on the high score tables. Both are automatically saved on disc so that children can keep returning to the package to improve on previous results.

Certificate Printing

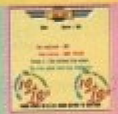
Children with high marks can print a certificate of achievement. Text or graphic options are given to suit any printer and *Triple R Education* will print you a special one for a nominal charge.



Three Sets of Graphics

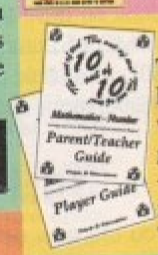
All the games have three sets of graphics to appeal to any age. These are automatically selected depending on grade – a parent/teacher override is provided so that you can select the pictures most suited to your child.





Unparalleled Quality and Attention to Detail

This package is the result of months of work by experienced programmers, educational designers, game designers, teachers, parents and children.



Two Guides

The player guide lets learning start quickly while the parent/teacher guide gives more details – including how to interpret the Attainment Target numbers.

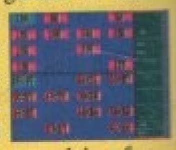
Parent/Teacher Flexibility

Many of the automatic features of *10 out of 10* can be customised by parents or teachers – including sound off/on, the starting grade and the graphics to be used. A *Reveal* option lets you see the educational objective of the game being played at a glance. There's even an optional code system to prevent children altering stored information.



Ideal for ALL Ages: Junior to GCSE

The fully flexible games all start with very simple ideas but develop to cover the more advanced topics. Adults will find the higher levels compulsive fun and a challenge too!



SIX Top Games

The games are designed with education of paramount importance but the fun and challenge elements ensure that children will want to strive for better results each time.



Designed for the National Curriculum with Traditional Educational Values in Mind

While ensuring that items like tables and spelling are well covered the package deals with many important subjects in the order recommended in the National Curriculum.

The *10 out of 10* Series is produced by Triple R Education 0742 780370

10 out of 10 Maths (Number) and *10 out of 10* English are both available NOW for only £25.95 each.

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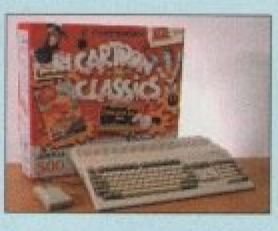
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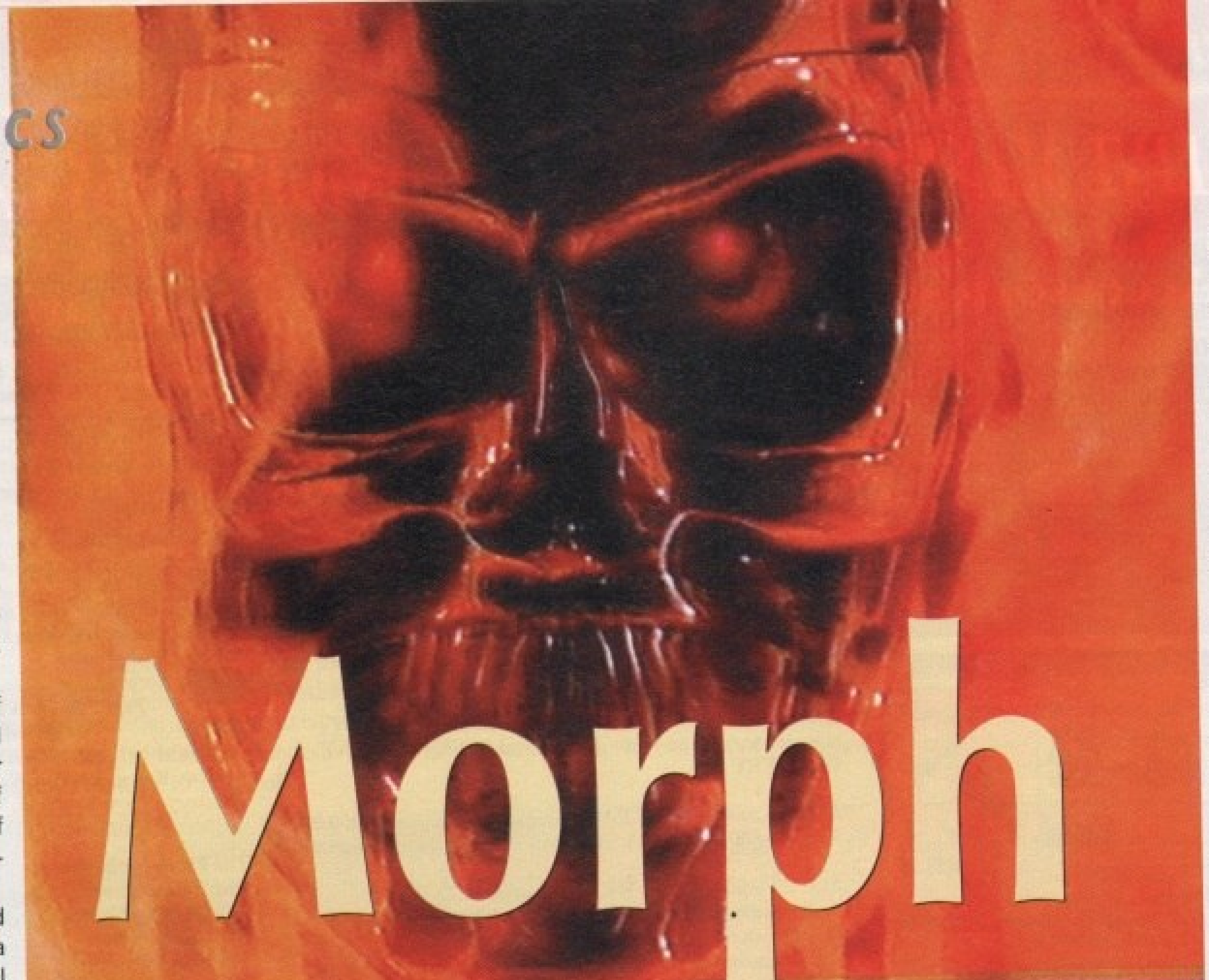
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Morph mania

Stretch your extremities, transform like Terminator II, warp like a warpy-thing... Paul Austin jumps on the biggest bandwagon ever to leave Hollywood

Yes folks, *Amiga Computing* investigates the hottest craze since the space hopper. If you've switched on a TV or watched any self respecting Sci-Fi during the last year or two you've almost certainly experienced morphing and warping in action.

In the past magical FXs of this magnitude were strictly the domain of the Hollywood moguls, but now thanks to ASDG, GVP and Black Belt, the ultimate in movie magic awaits us all.

Before the three ring circus of MorphPlus, CineMorph and ImageMaster step out to the roar of the grease paint and smell of the crowd a brief description of what a morph and a warp actually are is well worth recount.

The first thing to keep in mind is the difference between a morph and metamorphosis. We'll start with the latter. When the phrase metamorphosis is used in the computing sense it refers to a transition of one three dimensional form into another with both elements sharing an equal number of points.

Mind blowing

If you're not into ray tracing or 3D modelling this has probably done little or nothing to clarify the situation, as the technique is almost exclusive to such applications.

Although a truly mind-blowing effect in the right hands, metamorphosis tends to fall woefully short when it comes to believable real word emulation.

For example to create a convincing metamorphosis of a seemingly real human head into another would be a difficult if not impossible task on even the most powerful ray tracing package. On the other hand such transformations are second nature to any self respecting morphing program.

The essential difference between both methods is the number of dimensions employed. Unlike ray tracing, morphing is strictly two dimensional. In other words, morphing software has no concept of distance or perspective, it's only priority is the manipulation of a flat 2D image.

Because of this its perfect for manipulating real world imagery that's been captured from video tape or alternatively scanned from existing artwork.

The owl to baby examples are a perfect example of morphing in action, just two scanned images manipulated to create and unlimited number of "tweens" which gradually transform the ultimate in mouse murderers into mother's pride and joy.

To initialise the effect the prominent features are linked by either vectors or alternatively a mesh system, the outlines set, the transition and dissolve parameters applied, the sequence number added and you're off. Spectacles stretch into windscreens and teeth transform into the grill of the latest star of the showroom floor. Obviou[sly] no matter now powerfu[l] package it helps if there's [at] least a tenuous link betwe[en] the source and the targ[et]. For example morphing [a] sub-post office into a car[ica]ture of Phil Collins might [be] quite amusing but [it's] unlikely to be particular[ly] believable – especially [on] the less accurate morphing systems.

Although the phra[se] morphing has stolen th[e] limelight in the popu[lar] press its lesser known cou[n]terpart namely warping [is] almost certainly the mo[st] frequently used of the tw[o].

Although the transi[tion] of a hero to his malform[ed] alter ego is indeed mem[o]rable it's by no means [as] common as the bulging [of] eyes, stretching of extrem[i]ties and general mutation [of] features found throughout popular adve[rtis]ing and TV.

The basic difference between the tw[o] methods is that warping operates on a si[n]gle image producing a single or sequen[tial] transition of the specified features.

For example, a simple eye bulge wou[ld] consist of encircling or defining the are[a] around the eyes, adjusting the finishi[ng] positions of the target, then either rende[r]ing a single image to produce a straightfor[]ward before and after, or alternatively a[n] entire series ideal for animation.

This last reference to animation is wort[h] clarifying a little before you read on to the animated or moving warps and morph[s] mentioned below. When a series of sta[tic] images are morphed or warped over a ser[ies] of frames the resulting images can inde[ed] combine to produce animation.

However, this is not an animated warp [or] morph. The end result may indeed end [up] as an animation, but the process is stric[tly]

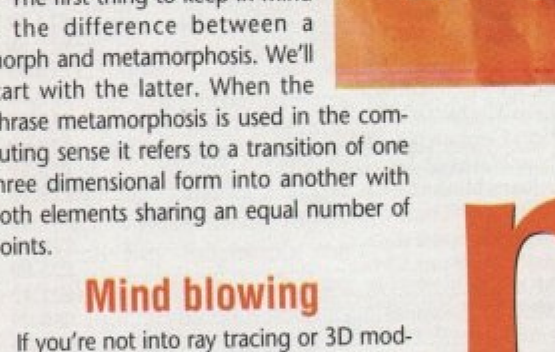
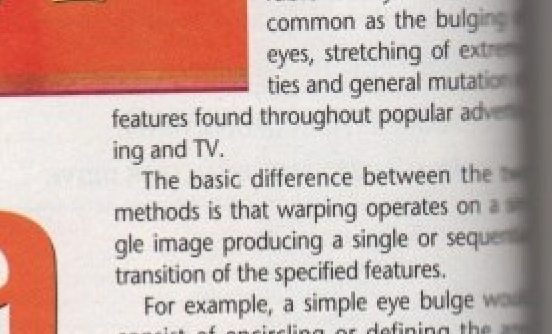
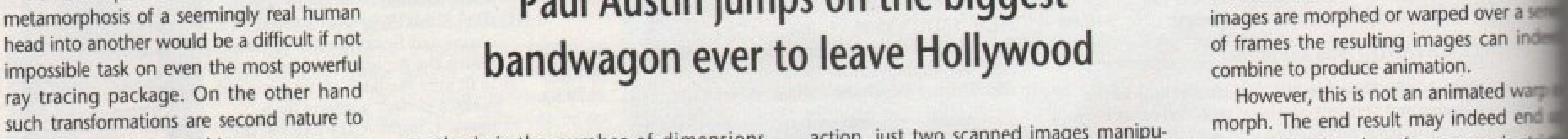


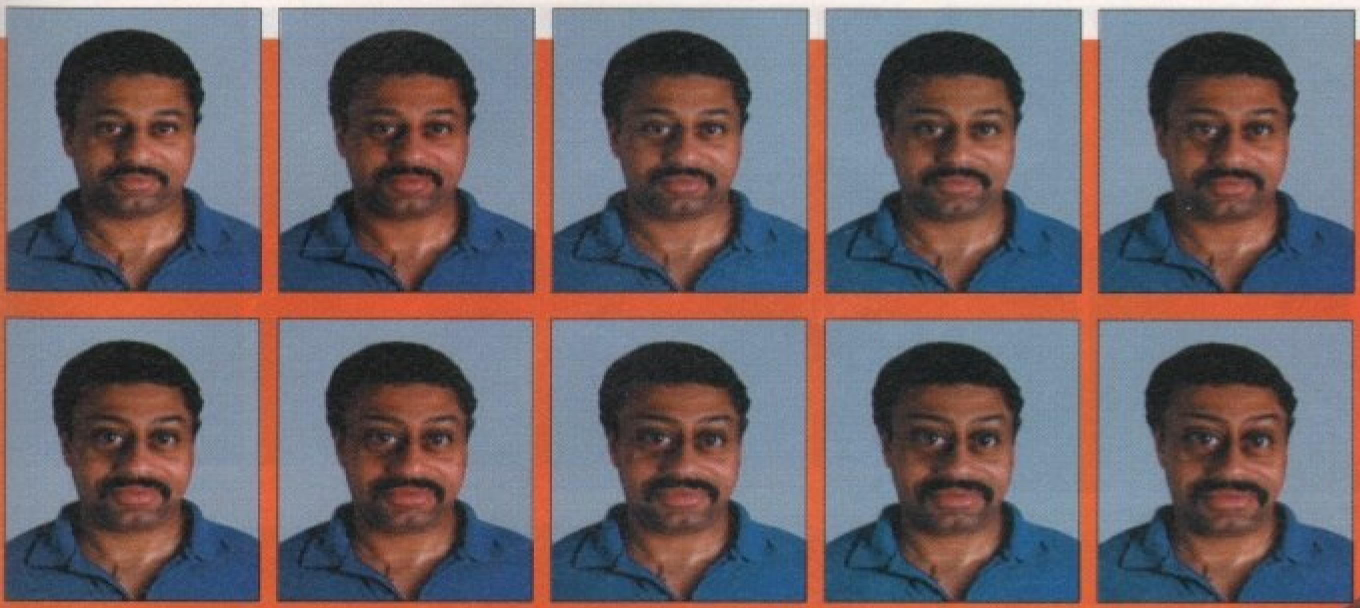
Image Mr's Warping window creating a face only a mother could love



Morphing madness, Image Mr makes its mark









CineMorph shows its stuff. Ideal for soft features, but not so hot on hard edges

static. It's only the "tweens" generated by the software that produce the effect of movement, the original images themselves never move an inch.

Image Mr

Although the title is new, the software itself was the first to bring morphing to the Amiga. Formerly known as Image Master but recently renamed for legal reasons the software is now shipping in its 9.20 revision.

At its release the software offered morphing was one of its many image processing options. Now Black Belt have added warping to sweeten this already sugar-coated package.

Like its rival MorphPlus, Image Mr offers both animated as well as static morphs and warps, which again like its counterpart from ASDG, employ point editing as their desired processing format.

Like CineMorph the package uses a double window display for the before and after images and boasts a new zoom option allowing accurate editing of fine detail.

In addition the morph panel offers the option to employ an optional skin overlay similar to that used within MorphPlus entitled Arc vectors. Unfortunately the Image Mr option is noticeably slower and lacks the instantaneous image mixing options and separate blending controls found within its counterpart. Nevertheless it's yet another string to the bow.

The morph and warp interface benefit immensely from the main program's film strip option which when active instantly creates thumbnails of the newly-generated frames. And when all the frames are complete the film player built into the warp and morph control panels allow syou to play back your creation in miniature at the frame rate of your choice.

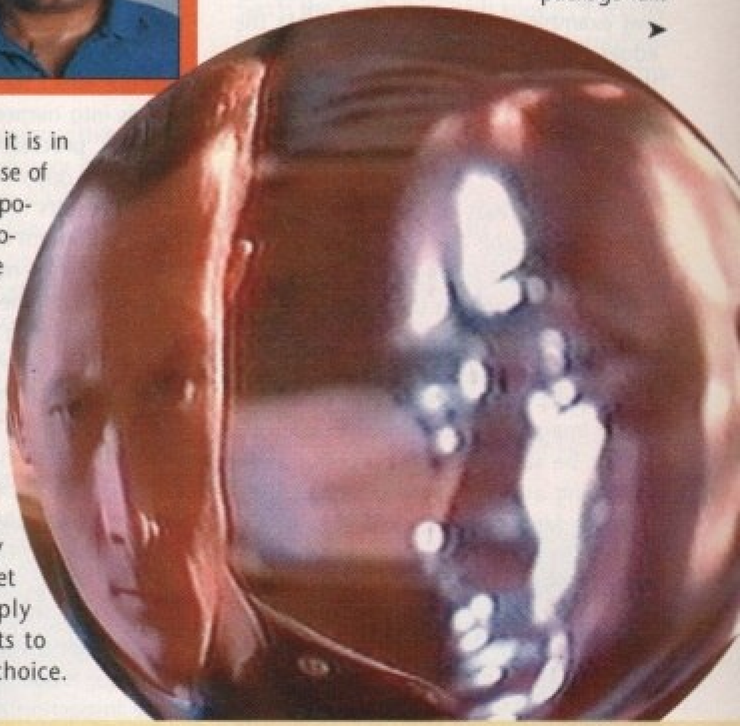
If there's is one area in which Image Mr scores particularly well it is in speed of editing and ease of use. Unlike both the opposition packages, the program defines before and after points as simple crosses on the source and target images.

To morph or warp a feature means simply adding the points to the source image. These are then instantly generated on the target where you then simply move the target points to the position of your choice.

The only downside is that is can become a little confusing as to which points on each image relate to each other.

Like the two other packages in the round-up, the program also boasts definable transition and dissolve options. An added bonus shared with MorphPlus is the ability to define separate settings for selected groups which means, unlike Cinemorph, individual elements within morphs or warps can be transformed at different rates.

As you'd expect, Image Mr also boasts key frame options for animated morphs and warps plus the option to save and load points as required. As for speed the package falls ➤

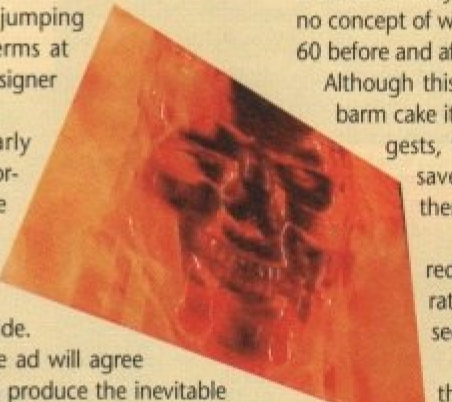


Moving morphs and warps

Before the inevitable techno-jargon that goes along with any complex computing procedure I'll point out perhaps the perfect example of an animated morph in action. If there's an advert of recent times that's exploited morphing more than any other it's sporting example offered by Reebok.

For the benefit of those readers who've missed this particular masterpiece in marketing the advert features several lycra-clad sporting types running, jumping and generally extolling -- in graphic terms at least – the virtues of their expensive designer footwear.

On the face of it nothing particularly unusual – apart from the amazing transformation of the various athletes during the action. As the assorted Olympians stride across the screen they seamlessly flow from man to woman, black to white and back again without even breaking stride.



I'm sure those of you who've seen the ad will agree the effect is spectacular and never fails to produce the inevitable "How do they do that" query from the suitably impressed buying public.

The answer to that particular question is simple – animated morphing at its best. Although it may be hard to believe anyone with an Amiga and suitable software can now create exactly the same results. But be warned, creating animated morphs is a very time-consuming procedure.

Unlike static morphs their animated counterparts require a source and destination image for every frame in the sequence. So, for example, a 30 frame sequence would require 60 frames for a true animated morph.

Obviously digitising, scanning and processing this amount of imagery takes a long time and a sizeable amount of disk space. Alas this is only the beginning due to the differences between each image pair in the sequence. As a result it's impossible to simply set the points on the beginning and end frames as you would with a static morph, allowing the software to generate the tweens.

As you may have guessed automation can take a back seat when it comes to truly animated morphs and warps. Because software has no concept of what you're trying to achieve, ideally every one of the 60 before and after frames should be adjusted manually.

Although this may sound about as appetising as a broken glass barm cake it's not nearly as painful as the initial description suggests, thanks primarily to key frames and the option to save points from one image and then load or carry them to the next frame.

Because of point carrying, editing time is vastly reduced, as the original points need only be moved rather than added from scratch for ever frame in the sequence.

In addition to carrying points, adding key frames to the sequence can make life much easier as in affect you are adding target point positions within the sequence which allows the program to tween some of the frames for you — at the expense of a slight loss in accuracy.

Obviously key frames can save a lot of time but if must be stressed that key framing is basically a compromise in disguise. If you only apply a few key frames in a long sequence the end results will obviously suffer badly in relation to a similar sequence with a key frame at every other frame.

A similar key framing and point carrying process applies when dealing with animated warps within MorphPlus and Image Mr. Alas animated warps aren't directly supported with CineMorph – a real pity...

somewhere between CineMorph and MorphPlus and like all three packages it's surprisingly quick considering the complexity of the subject.

As far as quality is concerned again Image Mr falls roughly between its counterparts. Like CineMorph the program is particularly strong when morphing elements within a fairly uniform background. For example bulging eyes and features with soft or undefined edges morph extremely well.

Alas, like CineMorph, the program does suffer in comparison with MorphPlus in that hard edges tend to ghost. As you probably see from the Image Mr baby-to-owl example, when the head shrinks the edges do tend to fade and ghost rather than transform.

Verdict

Although it's easy to knock the output, both the morph and warp options are extremely well implemented and are only out-gunned on the flexibility and output stakes by MorphPlus.

For the enthusiast looking to make his or her debut in serious image processing, Image Mr is the ideal choice. It must be stressed that morphing and warping are only a small part of the Image Mr repertoire, which in total offers image processing and special effects numbering in the hundreds.

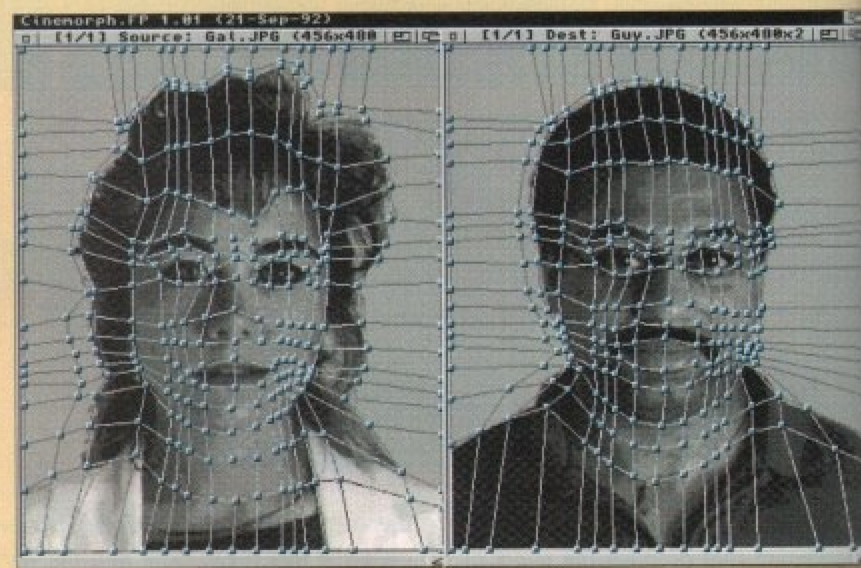


Unfortunately there appears no automated method of producing animated warps.

Given a little effort, it's possible to simulate the effect by splitting a sequence of frames into numerous sections which can then be processed individually using the static warp option.

The results could then be appended together to form a pseudo animated warp. It involves a lot more effort than is necessary with the other programs, but at least animated warping is theoretically possible.

The interface employs the duel window design similar to that offered by Image Mr - but that's where the similarities end. For example there's no built-in zoom option, instead close inspection requires the window to be stretched via the sizing gadget in the classic Workbench style.



CineMorph

Unlike both MorphPlus and ImageMaster this particular chestnut takes a totally different approach to both morphing and warping. Rather than using the point approach of its counterparts the program employs a mesh system which allocates areas with each square of the mesh which are then moved during the morph or warp to the position of their counterparts on the target image.

The software itself will produce both static morphs and warps plus animated morphs – with the assistance of key frames.

Obscured

Although the aforementioned resizing technique is quite usable, it does mean that close inspection of one image inevitably means that at least part of the second image is obscured. Another minor gripe is the inability to adjust the contrast and brightness of the source and target images – particularly useful when you're dealing with dark or complex artwork.

Actually adjusting the aforementioned mesh is a simple case of click and drag, with group point selection taken care of courtesy of shift and click combinations. Additional rows or columns can be added to the mesh by hot key or menu selections.

Actually specifying movement within an area is simply a matter of placing an area of the mesh over the desired point and then rearranging the same points on the target image.

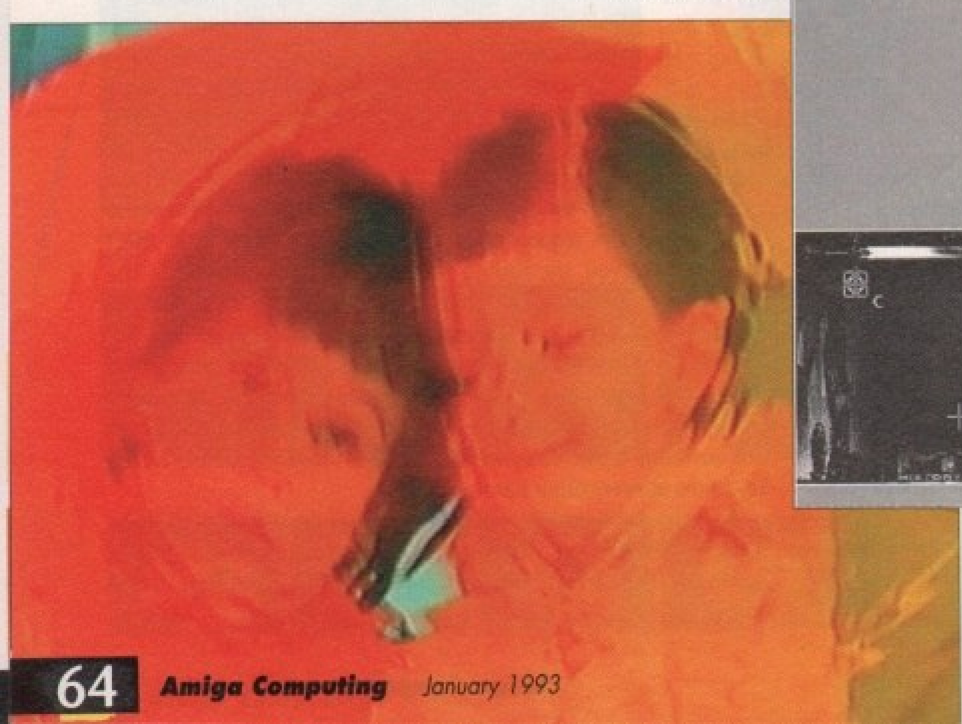
As you can probably see from the examples like Image Mr, this particular approach to defining transformation is extremely good on soft areas such as eyes, but unfortunately suffers quite badly, especially in relation to MorphPlus - when applied to hard edges and outlines.

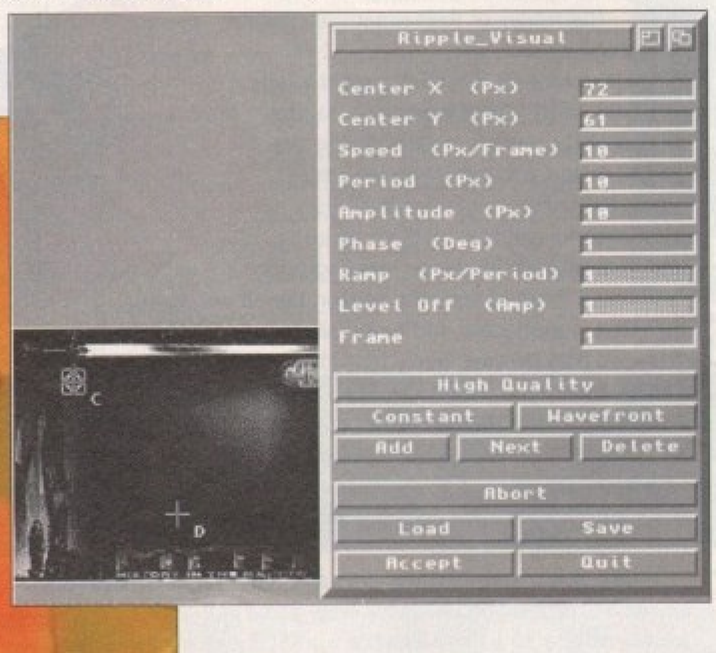
The problem of ghosting haunts CineMorph as it does Image Mr. Admittedly this does sound rather damning, but it's not an insurmountable problem if you are willing to put in a little addi-tional effort.

For example when a sequence or still is complete there's no reason why the images can't be touched up with a suitable paint package. Another alternative is to be slightly more selective concerning the image you choose to morph or warp. The more extreme the difference between source and target the more likely you are to encounter ghosting.

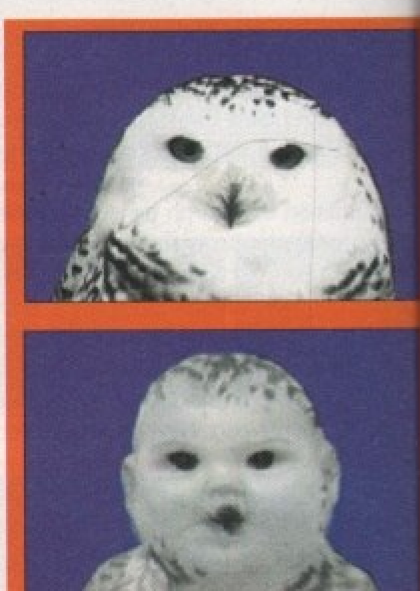
In addition to both of the above, you can also improve image quality by adjusting the fade and transition waves which determine the speed and strength of both effects during processing.

Alas, unlike both Image Mr and MorphPlus, CineMorph doesn't offer the ability to select individual groups allowing





The excellent ripple operator, new to ADPro and MorphPlus environment



A classic example of the dreaded ghosting. Time to boot up a paint package me thinks.

you to apply separate fade and transition waves as required. For example, this means it's impossibly to morph the eyes of a subject first and then gently add additional features later in the sequence.

Although slightly lacking in the flexibility stakes CineMorph isn't without its strengths. At the forefront of these is speed, which without doubt makes CineMorph easily the fastest of the three packages on test.

Rendering

However, I did find the saving on rendering time was counterbalanced slightly by the mesh editing system, which on complex images does require more effort in comparison to its counterparts.

The aforementioned rendering speed combines this with an impressive selection of rendering options including 24 bit, Ham, DCTV 3 and 4 bit planes, Ham-E and all standard Amiga modes.

But having said that both Image Mr and a combination of MorphPlus and ADPro can offer all of the above and more with the only exception being CineMorph's ability to generate standard Anim5 animations as the final output format.

The verdict

Obviously CineMorph has its faults, mostly concerning a lack in flexibility and a tendency to ghost. However with a little imagination, additional editing, and careful image selection very reasonable results can be achieved, especially when applied in situations that suit the programs strengths.

Above all, the package's strongest asset has to be it's price, which at literally half that of MorphPlus must make it an attractive option to users who already have a image processing system and merely wish to add the option to morph and warp.

However, if you're planning your first tentative steps into image processing the additional £70 required for Image Mr would be a very wise move considering the huge collection of additional effects and composition tools that come in addition to the program's morphing and warping options.



MorphPlus

As you may already be aware MorphPlus is the latest addition to the ADPro image processing system. Like its predecessor Fred – ADPro's frame editing and sequence compositor – it works as both a stand-alone package as well as seamlessly integrating into the ADPro environment.

For example, if any would-be user already has ADPro on their system installing MorphPlus in the same drawer means that all the loaders, savers and operators from each become a shared resource.

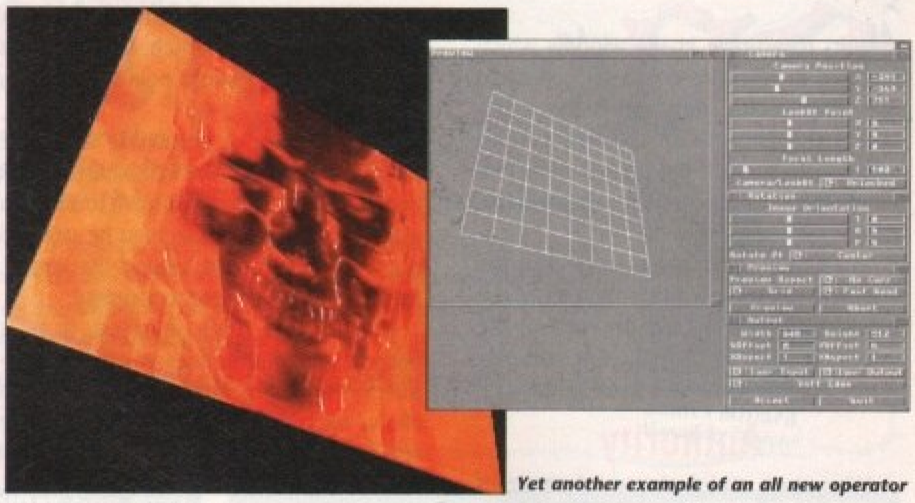
While we're on the subject of operators, this is a perfect opportunity to mention the "Plus" in MorphPlus. In addition to static and animated morphing and warping the package offers a selection of new ADPro style operators including warp, rotate, ripple, sphere, twirl and perspective.

Firm grip

By now you should have a firm grip of what can be achieved with the warping operator but some of the others may need a little more explanation.

Rotate, for example, allows circular areas to rotated to the angle of your choice while the ripple option allows you to add slash points from which an unlimited number of user-definable ripples emerge.

All the user needs do is define the splash point and assign the intensity and general dynamics of the effect. Next on the list comes the sphere option which allows total control over the familiar wrap-to-sphere feature found on numerous paint packages.



Yet another example of an all new operator

Twirl, the penultimate operator on the list, works in a similar manner to rotate but adds a definable twirl by twisting a pre-set circular area.

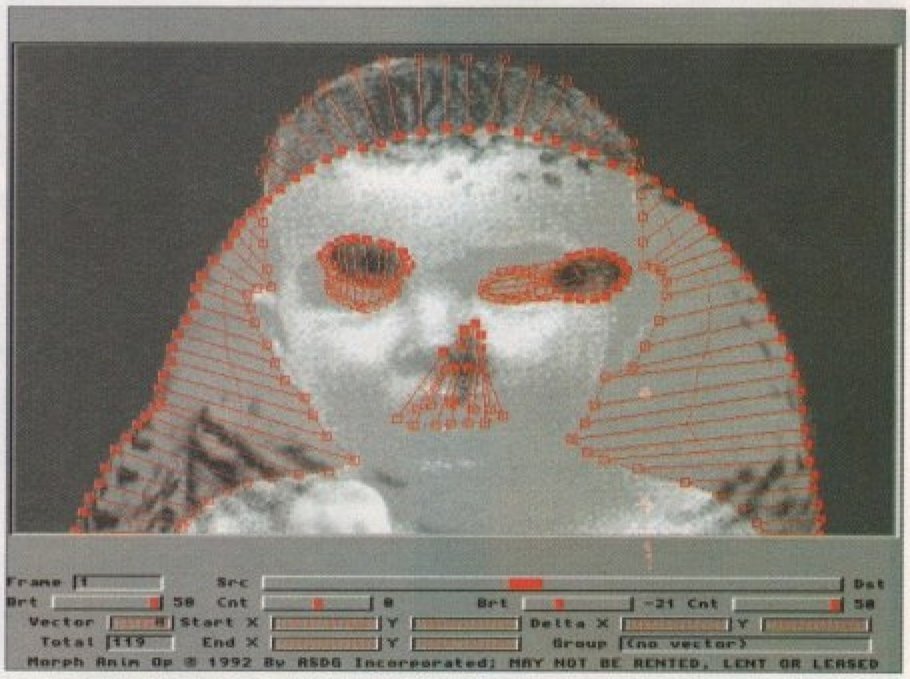
Lastly we come to perspective scale. Again a rather self-explanatory effect, but like all the new operators it's been implemented beautifully via the now familiar ADPro-style grey scale operator screens which accompany all the effects listed.

The interface of MorphPlus at first glance is almost identically to ADPro with the only noticeable exception being the parent program's separation controls and a slight re-arrangement of the various screen gadgets. A pointer to the similarity of the two is the requester which appears if you try to load ADPro in addition to MorphPlus. The aforesaid requester instantly informs you that a copy of ADPro is already running.

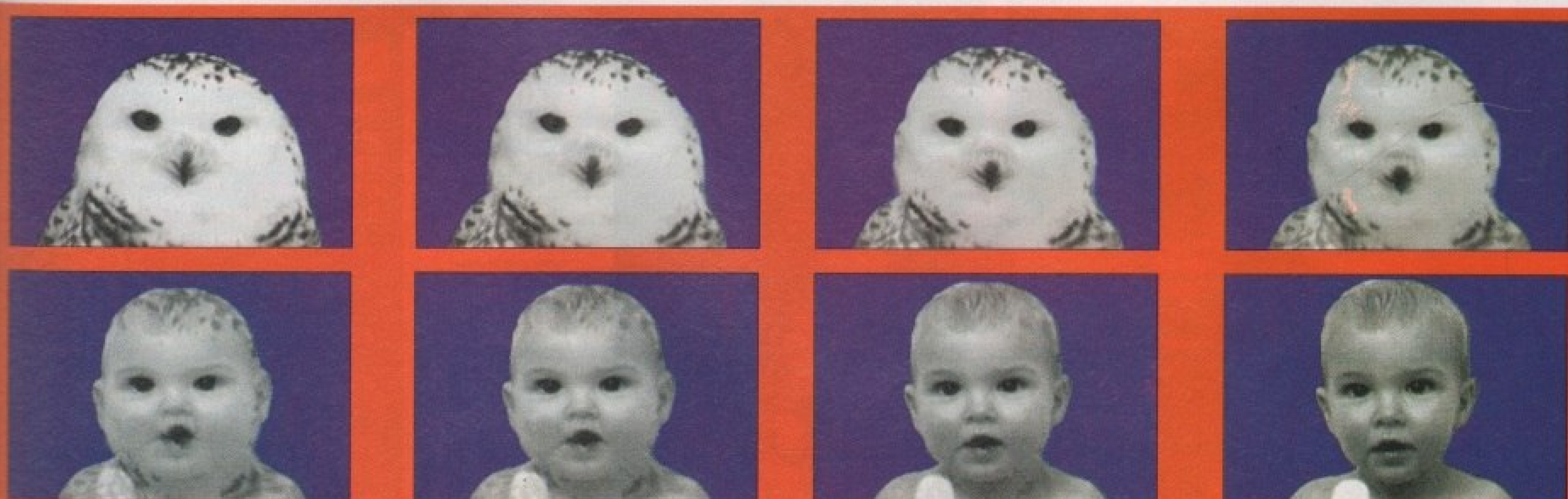
In addition to MorphPlus – the program – the package also supplies Fred as part of the bundle and, of course, Morph itself, the program that automates the sequential warping and morphing options.

Morph, unlike the MorphPlus program, is not stand-alone and requires that MorphPlus or ADPro be active before any processing whether animated or otherwise can commence.

Unlike both its counterparts, Morph ➤



The excellent MorphPlus interface. Total control and instant results



➤

defaults to a single image window which employs a definable onion skin effect to show both source and target images simultaneously. The mix of the two can be adjusted to provide the perfect mix via a slider which determines the relative transparency of each image.

In addition to definable image mix, the interface also boasts the option to adjust brightness and contrast on each of the images within the display. For complex warps and morphs this is a real godsend.

Authority

When such a high degree of control is combined with the freely interruptable screen refresh and instant zoom, MorphPlus begins to stamp its authority as the Amiga's premier warping/morphing environment.

To actually set up either a morph or warp, points are added via a mouse click and keyboard combination. Each point appears with its counterpart appended via a connecting link which can then be stretched to the desired point on the target image.

Once a series of points are complete they can then be linked via another click and keyboard combination to form a group. These groups can then be selected as individuals, moved around the screen, cut, pasted and deleted as required.

In addition, once selected, groups become separate entities within the production and, like Image Mr, MorphPlus allows each group to have its own fade and transition settings within the overall project.

As a result, any element can transform or fade as and when required. It`s even possible to specify that selected features should remain the same, so, for example, the beard of a source subject could be grafted on to the face of its clean-shaven target image.

As with all three packages, points and groups can be saved and loaded as required but in addition the program offers the option to carry specified features on to the next frame of sequential projects, thereby avoiding any time wasting incurred during the load and save process employed by the opposition.

Other editing features include the ability to hide points and group selections in order to further clarify what on a complex project can become a very confusing collection of inter connected points and vectors.

Fastest

As you'd expect, key frames also play their part, so with the combination of group carries and key frames, MorphPlus is easily the fastest editing environment of the big three.

When all the points are in place and the frames set yet another feature allows you to watch the animation in its wire frame form before rendering the complete sequence. This again is a real time saver as any potential problems can be spotted in advance of the generation process which, contrary to ASDG's marketing, is in my opinion the slowest of the three packages on test.

A testament to the power of the program is that after lengthy experimentation I'm still at a loss to find a editing or processing tool I'd like to add. A prime example of that power is the program's ability automatically to duplicate or remove additional frames for animated warp and morph sequences, ensuring both image groups share an equal number of frames.

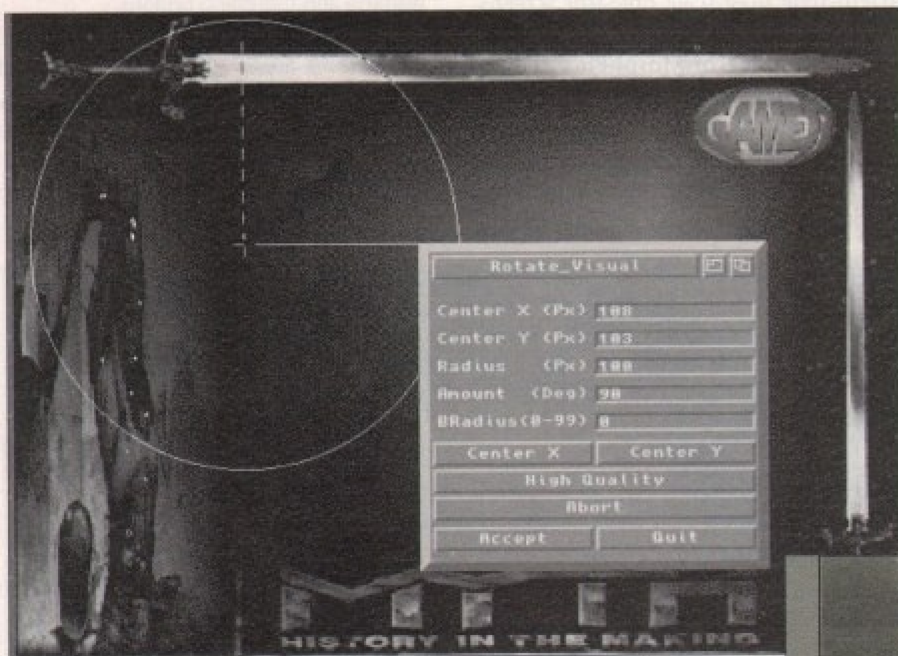
The verdict

When all of the above, plus the whole host of subtle additions and superior output quality are added together, MorphPlus can rightfully claim the title as the best in the business.

However, as usual there's a price to be paid. Firstly like its parent program ADPro, MorphPlus is a real memory monster, needing at least four megs of Ram to operate. In addition Workbench 2 is an essential as indeed is an accelerated machine and a hard disk, although the manual implies the latter of the two are optional –ho, ho....

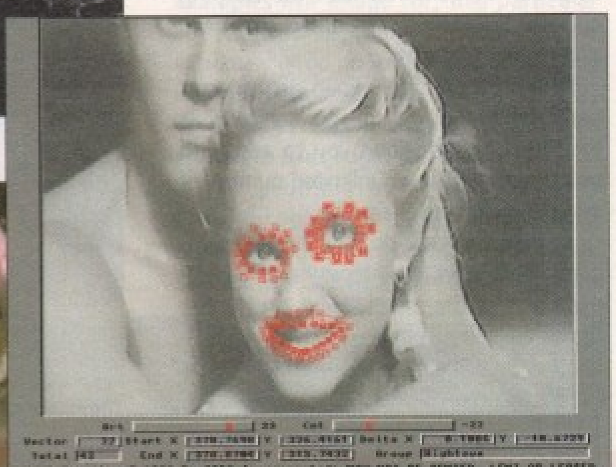
As the price tag and system requirements indicate, MorphPlus is a professional package and proud of it. For those who fall into that bracket and consider performance rather than price their prime consideration, there's only one choice.

But for the semi-pro/enthusiast building a system from scratch Image Mr at just £175 has to be the obvious choice, as to build an arguably better system with a combination of ADPro and MorphPlus would set you back a staggering £500 plus – and that's before the hard disk, accelerator and other image processing essentials.



Instant rotation, MorphPlus strikes again...





MorphPlus warping option, now available from the ADPro interface

Image Master

Ease of use 7
Flexibility 8
Image quality 8
Value for money 10
Overall 8

Available from: Amiga Centre Scotland
Tel: 0896 87583
Price: £175

CineMorph

Ease of use 6
Flexibility 7
Image quality 7
Value for money 7
Overall 7

Available from: Silica Systems
Tel: 081 309 1111
Price £99

MorphPlus

Ease of use 9
Flexibility 8
Image quality 10
Value for money 7
Overall 9

Available from: HB Marketing
Price: £199
Tel: 0753 686000

PHOENIX

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Welcome to our three page Christmas-Special which has all the products you need to make this a "Happy Amiga Christmas!"

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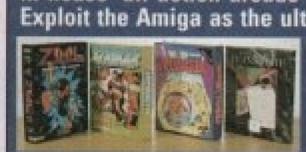


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- A600 1Mb (20Mb HD)
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- PA 601 RAM Expansion
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Based on Commodores Epic•Language pack, Option 3 gives the whole family maximum use of the Amiga.



Phoenix have added to the top quality software titles already in the pack with a choice of fun school titles for the children and Monkey Island 2, (Amiga Format Gold winner). They complete what is an unbeatable software based pack. Whether it's word processing, learning, home accounts or just good old game playing, the FAMILY PACK is all you need.

NORMAL R.R.P. inc VAT............ £1006.86
PHOENIX OPTION 3 £929.99

WHAT YOU GET!
- A600 1Mb Epic/Language pack (20Mb Hard Drive)
- Phillips Monitor 8833 MkII
- Star LC100 9 PIN Colour Printer
- PA 601 1 Mb RAM Expansion
- Fun School 3+4
- Monkey Island 2
- 50 Capacity Disk Box
- 10 Phoenix Bulk Disks with Labels
- Joystick (fully microswitched)
- 8mm Mouse Mat

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"Unbelievable", "Crazy", are just some of the quotes from the industry regarding the demise of the A500+.



Destined never to be sold again the A500+ was superceded by the A600 range. However, Phoenix have secured one of the largest stocks in the UK of the Cartoon Classics Pack and offer you the very last chance to purchase this legendary machine!!

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TRAIL BLAZERS-WHAT'S NEW IN NOVEMBER 1992!

In this month's pre-christmas "TRAIL BLAZERS," we focus on some of the best products and peripherals currently on release for the Amiga

PHOENIX 1Mb A600 UPGRADE



Simply the Best !

£44.99

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This famous super slim drive has now been upgraded to include Anti-click and virus checker - We have reluctantly had to raise the price of this product due to the variance of the dollar rate. However to soften the blow we will include a FREE disk head cleaner worth £3.99

Phoenix price.........£64.99

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Designed for the Amiga 1500/2000/3000 and 3000T this is a 25MHz 80386SX PC/AT Emulator. PC/AT slot support-Max 16 Mb PC/RAM, 4Mb for Amiga-Will use PC/AT IDE Hard Disk and floppy disk drives 2.88 Mb under Amiga DOS, highly recommended.

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This powerful, unique WYSIWYG word processing package is the best value choice for your Amiga, sharing many of the features of full-blown DTP packages

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Be safe in the knowledge that you are buying the official UK version of the product from Phoenix. *BEWARE of dealers offering "Latest version" of Final Copy. This may be American product and should not be sold in the UK!*

AMOS PROFESSIONAL

The most eagerly awaited software package of the year, has just received an award of 97% in CU AMIGA. Francois Lionet's superb creation has now evolved to include numerous new features developed from Amiga users ideas and feedback. Don't miss this six disk Bonanza!

Phoenix price £44.99

OPAL VISION

Amazing new 24-Bit graphics card and video system for the Amiga 1500, 2000 and 3000. Includes software suite worth hundreds of pound. With an incredible performance, this is simply awesome.

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Please Note: this is a limited offer only while stocks last!

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High quality sound sampler for all Amiga Computers
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A 570 CD ROM — CD-ROM

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The Q Tower system is available in kit form from £449.00 to receive an information pack please contact

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If you read *AC's* November review of the GVP A530, the Amiga's best-selling, most powerful hard drive, accelerator and RAM upgrade expansion, you can't fail to have been impressed by the power and speed that the A530 brings to the Amiga and the extraordinary value for money it represents.

The A530 turns the Amiga 500 into a powerful 32-bit power workstation. With the 32-bit RAM and the powerful 68030 processor you can now run your software at a blistering 40MHz – nearly six times faster than a normal A500, which runs at 7.14MHz.

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GVP

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How to enter

You can enter by phone as many times as you wish. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries received. Decide the correct answers to these questions:

1. How much does the GVP A530 cost?
a) £799 b) £7,990 c) £79

2. How long does the warranty last on the A530?
a) 6 months b) 1 year c) 2 years

3). What speed does the normal A500 run at?
a) 7.14MHz b) 7.15MHz c) 7.16MHz

You will be asked to leave your answers together with your name and full postal address, including your postcode. You will also be asked which machine you currently own. Please speak clearly, spelling out any difficult words.

Calls are charged at 36p per minute cheap rate and 48p per minute at all other times.

Storm Publicity Ltd, Canada House, 272 Field End Road, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex

Flexible Friends

Phil South looks at the pick of the new floppy drives on offer and asks: "Can you have too many floppies?"

There comes a time in every Amiga owner's life when he discovers that although the Amiga has a nice neat little disk drive inside, life ain't so sweet when all you do is change disks all day. An external drive is what's needed, and dang me poons if there aren't about 68 billion on the market.

If you don't have a second drive you should really get one as it adds a lot to your enjoyment of your machine. Imagine copying a disk without having to swap the disk a few times? Or how about loading a big game simply by putting the first two disks in both drives and sitting back?

There are various types to choose from, some with little LED track displays, some that click and don't click, some are thick and some are slim, but which is best for you? Well the best one is really always the cheapest one.

Drive technology has really come on in recent years and almost all the standard slimline drives are the same in reliability and function give or take the odd few duds. Generally the drive mechanisms are from the same few manufacturers, with the casings and interfaces bolted on by the retailer. On with the reviews!



Evesham Micros Internal Drive

(Evesham Micros £39.99)

Problem: internal drive on Amiga 500 starts choking on everything you feed it, munching disks, or just plain not working. Solution 1: suck you brains out with a vacum cleaner and drop your Amiga in the bin. Solution 2: take it to the menders and get an estimate of the damage.

Wait till he says the drive needs replacing and say right-o, pay him his fee for the estimate and go home el quicko. Get on the blower and order an internal drive from Evesham and fit it using the simple instructions. Labour costs = 0, and it doesn't take an electronics genius to do it either.

The drive is good quality, in my opinion better than the native Amiga one that it replaces (they are generally pretty ropey as a rule). The button to pop the disk out has been altered to fit the oddly positioned hole on the side of an Amiga, so yes, it's supposed to look all wiggly like that. Lovely job.

Ease of Installation 5
Build Quality 8
Bang for bucks 6
Overall 5

Power Computing Dual Drive

(Power Computing £125)

This is the real king of the external drives, killing several birds with one very large stone. More like a brick actually. It's not what you might call a slimline drive but then it does contain two complete disk drive units and delivers twice the punch in a package only a tad larger than the old fashioned fatline single drives.

The drive contains the same features as the company's popular PC880B single drive, which is to say theit is sold with Blitz Amiga hardware/software combo enabling you to back up disks at lightning speed and it has a virus blocker and anti-click mechanism.

Amiga Blitz is part software and part hardware. On the back of the drive is a function switch which selects anti virus mode, normal mode, or Blitz mode, and the latter is used in conjunction with the software to create one of the fastest disk copiers ever devised. There are small drawbacks to this function, however.



You have to re-boot before using the drive in any of the modes, and you can't use the drive normally with Workbench when in Blitz mode.

To avoid any problems with power overheads, the unit has its own power supply, though I'd have thought for use with the A1500/A2000/A3000 this wouldn't be a problem. There's a port on the back for daisy chaining and a disable switch so you can turn the drive off when a program doesn't like external drives. I think this is brill, and I hope Power Computing forget I've got it... (dring dring). Oh double drat.

Ease of Installation 8
Build Quality 9
Bang for bucks 9
Overall 9

Evesham Micros External Drive

(Evesham Micros £47.99)

If there's such a thing as a good bog standard external drive, then this is probably it. Slimline design, disable switch, through port for daisy chaining. It's all there, and the price is right.

This is the same unit that Evesham have been making for years, and comparing it with the one I bought about five years ago I notice that it's identical. Why change anything if it does the job, eh? No frills, but then who really needs them?

This is the unit on test that I can really comment on the reliability of – five years without a single screw-up. Not bad. Not as slim as the Zappo, or curvy as the Cumana, but drop dead solid.

Ease of Installation 8
Build Quality 8
Bang for bucks 6
Overall 7

Cumana CAX354

(Cumana £56)

As I recall back in the old days, Cumana were the people who used to make disk drives for everything, BBC, Acorn, Sinclair QL... ah, I remember when... (Knock it off, Snouty and get to the point! Ed) Sorry. It's nice to see that they're still around, and so they should be as one of the premier drive- ➤

Jargon buster

Daisy chaining

The act of chaining another drive on to the back of another one. Some disk drives have another drive port on the back and you can plug another drive into it. The name comes from the way the drives look when fixed together resembling a daisy chain.

Device name

All drives on an Amiga system have a name, and to make it easy the names are device names, that is to say they have a colon ":" on the end. The internal drive is called DF0:, the next external drive is called DF1:, then DF2: etc. Interestingly enough, if you have a A-Max II Macintosh emulator, the first external drive is the Mac drive, invisible to the system, and so the first Amiga drive is always DF2:! Strange but true.

Drive Click

Amiga drives click every few seconds or so because they are looking for a disk in the drive. Some PD programs exist to stop this, but some drives actually have a hardware solution to the problem.

Mountlist

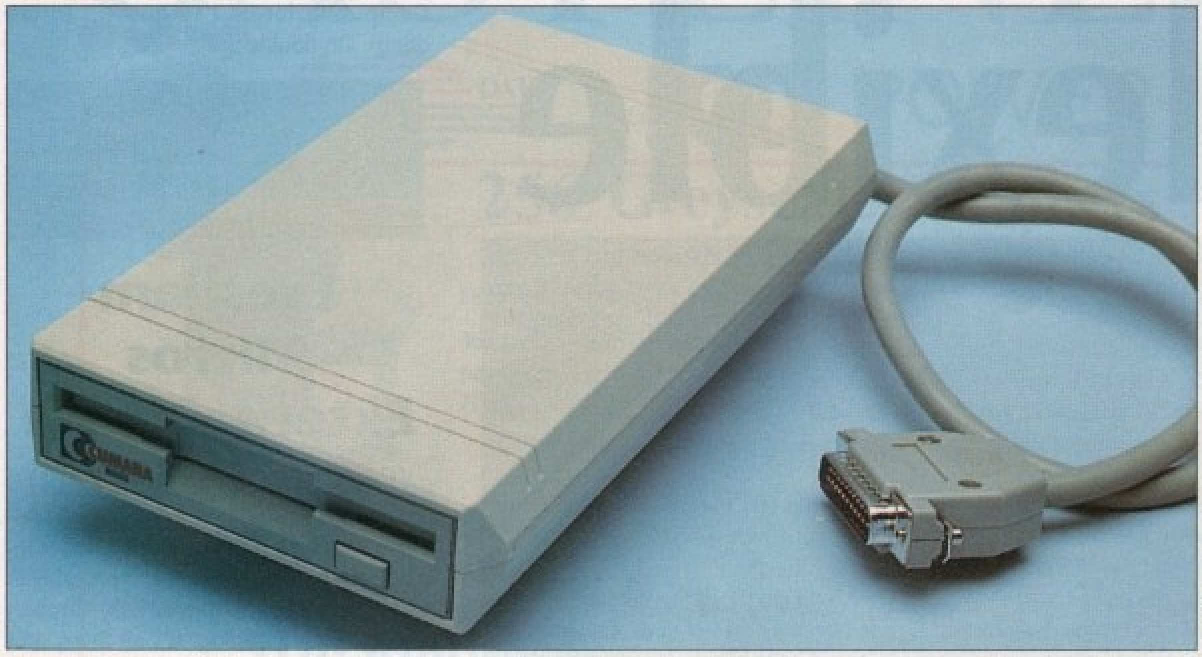
On your boot disk or hard drive partition, the list which describes all your devices and drives which are mounted to the system. The list describes the amount of sectors on the disk and what the drive number is.

Power overhead

Daisy chaining drives together is a little bit hazardous on the A500. The power overhead (the power left after some is drawn by each device down the drive port) decreases to very low levels as more drives are added. One or two external drives is all you can really get away with, and it's always safer to add a drive with its own power supply.

Slimline

Drives used to be big lunking great buggers, and then came the slimline drive mechanism. We said at the time "some time all drives will be made this way" and we were right, as usual.



The Cumana has been around for a while, but is still a solid drive

meisters in the UK.

Fitting then that their drive should be so distinctive. With it's bevelled cream plastic case and heavy duty hardnut lead and plug, it looks like it means business.

The unit has all the features of the others, but feels more solid and positive. There is an on/off switch on the back to disable the drive, but you don't know which way the button should be unless you look on the base.

This is a good quality unit, but a little bit more expensive than the rest.

Ease of installation 8
Build quality 9
Bang for bucks 6
Overall 6

Zappo External Drive

(ZCL £49.99)

Once again the same deal. A slimline drive with sturdy cabling and on/off switch. The switch is a slide type but very positive and has a short throw. The Zappo is in fact the slimmest drive of the bunch, although I'd say there's only about 3-5mm in it.

It's visibly smaller, and it could be my imagination but Zappo feels a lot more robust than the other units. The slimness of the thing means that the drive button is narrower, and could be a little harder on the finger.

Lovely bright LED though, which gleams out even the sunlight is pouring through the office window onto the drive. Good solid job.

Ease of installation 8
Build quality 9
Bang for bucks 7
Overall 8



Zappo's model is slimmer than most

Drives to look out for

KCS Dual Drive

(Bitcon Devices £TBA)

This is a very clever unit designed for use with the KCS Power PC Board, available in the UK through Bitcon Devices. The unit functions normally as a dual drive on the Amiga side, but the trick is that it can be a normal size or high density drive on both units.

However, the really smooth part is that it can also be a high density and normal density drive on the PC side too, meaning that you can read and write 1.44Mb PC disks and run the programs from them. This makes Windows applications accessible to the KCS user, although first you'll have to have a partition on your hard disk capable of holding all the files from the Windows master disks. (Okay, so you'll be running V-E-R-Y slow, but you can't have everything, eh?)

If the KCS drive has the same build quality and reliability as its PC emulator then this will be the drive everyone will want to own. It'll be pricey but then of course you are getting a very high specification product.

No more details at the time of writing but by the next issue of *Amiga Computing* we should have at least some pictures of the thing. So keep a weather eye open.

Amiga CDTV Drive

(Commodore, £42)

A cool black drive to go with the cool black CDTV. Just your basic 3.5" compact drive but in a nice satin finish black case to match the CDTV. Add a keyboard and a mouse in the same finish and you've miraculously turned your CDTV into a fully functioning Black 1.3 Amiga with an internal CD ROM drive.

Wow. Power Computing sell the entire kit'n'caboodle with CDTV, mouse, keyboard and disk drive for £599, which is extraordinary as this is cheaper than the CDTV used to be for just the unit alone!

And the winner is...

1. Power Computing Dual Drive

You've got to love a product which is big and strong. The Range Rover of the disk drive world.

2. Zappo

Slim and neat. Good value. Not a Ferrari, more a sort of MR2.

3. Evesham Micros External Drive

Small, neat, cheap. It does the job and no messing about. Ford Sierra, I'd say.

4. Cumana

Very posh if a little pricey in this range. Dead good though. Think BMW.

5. Evesham Micros Internal Drive

Few circumstances when you'll want to change your internal drive, but when you do this is your man. Following the motoring analogy I guess this must be a kit car!

Although the very best deal in external drives is always the cheapest you can get at the time, I really like the Power Computing Dual unit. It's simple to use and install, and yet powerful in use.

A tad more expensive than I perhaps would like, but you get a lot for your money: two drives worth £50 each, plus virus checking and fast disk copying thrown in. You can do all these things in software (virus checkers and XCopy perhaps) but having them online in hardware does seem a very attractive option.

Shopping List

Evesham Micros
Unit 9
St Richards Road
Evesham
Worcs
WR11 6XJ
Tel: (0386) 765500

Power Computing
Unit 8
Railton Road
Woburn Road Industrial Estate
Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7PN
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NEW AMIGA 1200 ZOOL PACK
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Or with 8833 Mk II Monitor
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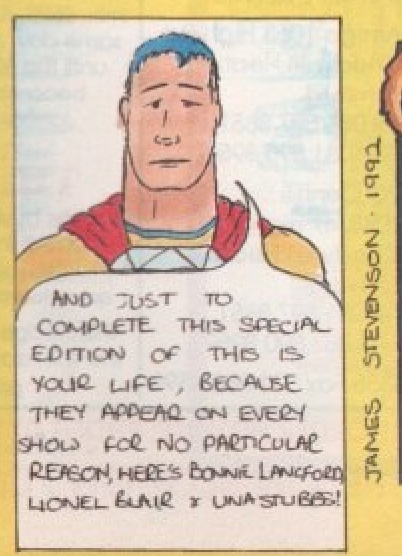
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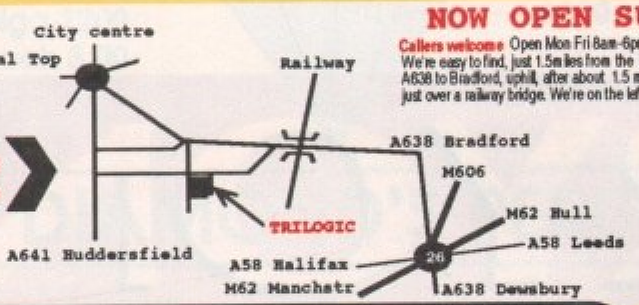
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Amiga Computing November 1992
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AMIGA Update

This month the *AC* spotlight falls once again on Vlab, the Amiga's premier frame grabber – a product that's just found a new lease of life in its external form

As the pages of *AC* regularly prove Vlab is undoubtedly the best standalone frame grabber in the business. However, in the past it's suffered one major drawback as far as mass market appeal is concerned.

Until now the system has been strictly an internal option for the A1500 and above. Fortunately for A500, A600 and A1200 users all that has changed courtesy of the new Vlab/Par which consists of a slimline vanilla box with a connecting cable direct to the Amiga's parallel port.

As far as aesthetics are concerned we're not exactly talking awe-inspiring, as control of the beast is handled exclusively by the accompanying software.

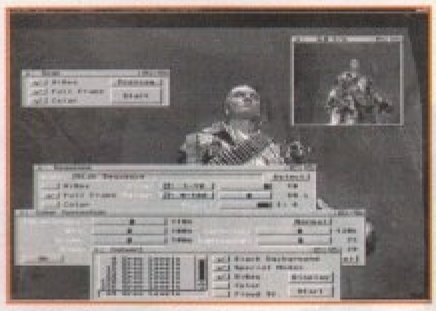
The only visible sign of life is a small LED on the rear of the unit which sits alongside a basic on/off toggle switch. Like the original internal version two female phones await the composite only input – again on the rear of the unit.

Three-pronged

In addition to the parallel cable the only other connection is the power supply which on the version tested consisted of a European-style block which required a two to three-prong converter prior to use.

However, it must be stressed that the unit tested was a direct import from the German manufacturer. As a result it's highly likely units intended for UK distribution will boast standard plug connectors.

In addition to the hardware, an all-new version of the Vlab software itself is supplied with the package. The new software is now at v2.1, offering several bug fixes and enhancements.



V-lab v.1, an excellent interface that just keeps getting better

These include support for Workbench 3.0 screen resolutions, transparent control of both internal and external Vlab formats, an option to save 24-bit files in the IFF-DEEP format as well as normal IFF 24.

More subtle enhancements include improved support for the Harlequin graphics card plus an optional "Hue" slider a well as a whole host of new and updated ARexx commands.

The software itself looks and operates just like all previous versions with a series of individual requesters available via pull-downs that allow a combination of customisation, image capture and processing.

Although rather intimidating with its vast array of requesters actual operation is very straightforward thanks to a combination excellent interface design and logical operation.

Assuming you've set up the system to suit and imported an image – either live or paused – conversion is usually the next task although if ultimate image quality is required the complete 24-bit itself can be saved direct to disk in the format of your choice.

If conversion is required Vlab offers several unique features including the option to convert the 24-bit capture into any standard Amiga image including 256 greyscales, 256 colours, or the ultimate quality of Ham8.



...Nubile sub-editor denies all knowledge



AC editor in office flatulence disaster...

This alone makes Vlab stand head and shoulders above the opposition, as creation of such images on other grabbing platforms would require the assistance of a dedicated image processing software such as ImageFX or ADPro – both of which weigh in at well over £200.

In addition to the impressive selection of image formats the software also boasts a few primitive processing tools, not least of which is the essential de-interlace which automatically strips one of the interlace fields producing rock solid results. With all the enhancements plus the option to grab sequential images from a live video source, what's the catch? Well in reference to the internal version none at all, but for the external system there is a compromise or two.

Because a parallel connection is unavoidable slower than a direct Zorro II, image transfer from the Vlab to the Amiga does suffer. For single frames the difference between the two formats is negligible with the only difference being that de-interlacing on the external tends to be a must rather than an option.

In addition, the delay between the monitor window display and what the grabber actually captures does tend to increase on the external, requiring a certain amount of guess work for accurate capture. Not an insurmountable problem but nevertheless mildly irritating.

The only area that suffers badly in relation to the internal is sequential grabbing. Again because of the limitations of the parallel link the grab rate is noticeably slower than that of its internal counterpart.

If you're interested in either the new external Vlab/Par and/or the update to the Vlab software – including the new ADPro loaders – contact The Amiga Centre Scotland on 0896 87583.

Prices: Vlab/Par – £382
Update to Vlab 2.1 software – £5
(Including ADPro loaders)

The ADPro connection

Alongside the release of the external Vlab and the 2.1 software comes the long-awaited ADPro loaders which have been doing the rumour circuit since the release of Vlab itself.

Fortunately the dream has finally become reality with both a YUV and Vlab loaders. As you might expect, the first of the two is simply a standard file loader for Vlab's default 24-bit file format while the second allows direct operation of the Vlab itself direct from the ADPro interface.



As the screenshot shows, the latter offers the usual ADPro operator window with selection options for offset, image size, source and so on. Strangely there's no option to monitor the incoming video signal necessitating the connection of a separate monitor or TV to the video source.

Only when the grab has been made can the preview option be employed. However, even with the monitoring limitation the loader can and does save a lot of time for both you, and a hard pressed CPU, which previously would have to contend with a memory-hungry ADPro and Vlab multitasking combination.

The only downside concerns the external variant of Vlab which at present is not supported by the ADPro loaders.

Ezra Surf's Postbag

Got something to say through the pages of AC? Ezra Surf is our mailman, dedicated to sitting in a corner reading your letters and selecting the most interesting for publication.

Drop him a line at:

Ezra Surf's Postbag, Amiga Computing,
Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

Please don't enclose saes as Ezra just hasn't got enough paper to reply personally. He might also have to shorten your letters, so don't be offended if you end up getting the chop.

4D con trick?

When I picked up your November issue 54 from the newsagent's shelf, I read the CoverDisk label, thinking to myself "that looks good! Model 4D, a complete 4D modeller and renderer."

However, when I got home and reached the CoverDisk pages, I realised I had been had. The disk pages state "being a complex package, and one into which the author has invested a great deal of time and mental sweat, Model 4D does not come to you in its complete form".

Please make your minds up! Is it complete or is it incomplete? I can appreciate that shareware authors work hard and should receive donations, but at the same time I think you should make things clearer on your front cover or disk label. Most people would, I think, resent paying for something then finding out that it wasn't what it said it was.

I hope you can remedy this problem, as I do enjoy reading your magazine. I will just have to open it before I buy it in future.

Mr Morley, Worthing

Good point, Mr Morley. I'm sorry if you feel cheated, but the mistake was not on the disk label. Model 4D is complete in that none of its functions are disabled, and it saves your work to disk.

What we should have said in the disk pages is that the program is still evolving, new features are being added, and those who register as shareware users will benefit by receiving all the upgrades.

In effect, Model 4D is an unfinished program, but no more unfinished than, say, Wordworth version 1 compared to the newly-released Wordworth 2.

Old Basic

I am writing with two requests for articles in your magazine. My nine-year-old son uses our Amiga 500 in many different ways, including DTP, programming, and games playing.

He also enjoys writing simple programs in Amiga Basic and would like to be able to encode a games program. Is it possible to print an article containing a sample program which would teach the reader about Basic programming and result in an executable file?

Finally, since we got our computer two and a half years ago, we have endeavoured to complete the game "Dungeon Master". Can you publish some game cheats to enable us to complete this game?

We are regular readers of your magazine and enjoy the mixture of serious applications, news, and games. Keep up the good work!

Pete Watling, Worcester Park

The problem with Amiga Basic is that it is no longer supplied with the Amiga and it is too old and clunky to qualify as a modern programming language. True, many coders sut their teeth on this ancient language, but we tend these days to concentrate on more popular packages such as Amos.

Our regular Amos Almanac column caters for most ability levels, and as Amos is essentially Basic with lots of added extras, I would advise you buy a copy for your son. With diligence and persistence, he could be producing full colour arcade games within months.

Dungeon Master is an old chestnut and has been covered extensively by most magazines. When still a current game, several complete game guides were printed, so if you can hunt out an old Amiga mag you might be in luck. I'm afraid we can't devote much-needed space to such old titles, there being so much more demand for tips on the latest chart-toppers.

That said, the Gamer Back Stroke page is open to letters from frustrated gamers everywhere, so if you drop the guys a line, they may be able to help you.

Aliens return

In the November 1992 issue, Richard Harrison wrote saying that Hicks in Aliens shouts "Drake! We are leaving!"

Well, I've watched this film more times than I can remember, and I'm sure Hicks shouts "Marines! We are leaving!" Stay frosty.

Paul Matthews, St Leonard's-on-Sea

We could watch the film to find out who's wrong and who's right, but we're a bit too lazy (busy - Ed) for that. Tell you what, the first person who sends us a disk with the original soundtrack section in 8SVX sample form can have the honour of settling this pressing debate through the Ezra pages.

PC protagonist

Prize letter

I have noticed that there have been a number of letters recently from Amiga users considering changing their machines to a PC.

Having seen Links Pro on a PC, I was very impressed. The graphics are outstanding to say the least, and if this is typical of all games or prospective games for the PC, then this is what I want.

However, having read PC magazines for the last few weeks, I believe that operating one isn't quite as straightforward as operating an Amiga. I mean, a mouse driver to run a mouse? Why can't you just plug in and go? 30Mb disk space for a paint program? Sounds incredible.

I use my A500 Plus with hard drive for wordprocessing, Home Accounts, and playing games, but I want a machine which can give me the graphic quality of Links Pro. The Amiga version is nowhere near as good and is so slow in screen updates that it is unplayable.

The sort of graphic quality I want is that of the Planetside demo produced by Psygnosis for CDTV. If this was available, I'd buy a CD-ROM drive and put up with having to swap it and my hard drive every time I wanted to use one or the other.

However, after speaking to Psygnosis I am informed that the demo program will go no further. Why not? Planetside is the sort of game I thought CDTV was intended for. When CDTV was first announced I was going to be one of the first to purchase one, but having seen the software available and the lack of hard drive through port on the A570 I will wait a bit longer.

When can we expect to see flight simulators in the form of Planetside?

Barry Fullbrook, Highbury

You say you've seen Links Pro on a PC, but you obviously haven't played it, or the game's mind-numbing slowness would have put you off. What's more, the present batch of PC games are unlikely to improve for a variety of reasons.

First of all, PC game programmers have encountered the dreaded and nigh prehistoric 640k barrier. Due to the PC's obsolete design, single executable programs can never have more than 640k base memory in which to run, and there are several games already which depend on the user turning off many standard PC startup programs to free as much base memory as possible.

Can you imagine having to edit your startup-sequence every time you wanted to play a game?

Secondly, the VGA graphics standard has a fair number of colours and decent screen modes to offer, but these work lamentably slowly when animation is called for. The Amiga's built-in graphics chips work much more effectively than most VGA cards, though the PC owner prepared to spend hundreds of pounds on a graphics accelerator could close the gap.

As for the future, AA chips offering lightning-quick 256 colour animation, faster and bigger sprites, and more powerful CPUs should keep the Amiga well ahead of any competition, be it in the shape of PC clones or tiddly little console toys.

Again, your objections to CDTV are valid, but don't be too surprised if CDTV software starts to look a lot more attractive over the next six months.

Esp

All washed out

I have recently taken out a standing order for *Amiga Computing* and look forward to a long association with it.

I have a problem perhaps you or one of your readers could help me with. I purchased a copy of Magnetic Scrolls' Wonderland game for my daughter whilst at a UK Amiga show, but have since spilled white spirit on the instruction book, ruining most of the contents.

Can you tell me where I can get a replacement? I know Magnetic Scrolls have the copyright to the game, but I can't find any mention of them in AC. If required, I have the original book which I can produce if necessary. Any assistance would be appreciated by an Alice in Wonderland girl.

D F Goodyer, Gazi Magusa, Turkey

Magnetic Scrolls games are distributed in the UK by Virgin Games (081 960 2255). If you contact their customer services people and offer to send your original book or pay a nominal fee for the replacement, I'm sure they'll be able to help you.

If not, try our Classifieds, found in the Amiga Market. A small ad might turn up a helpful fellow gamer.

Not tempted

I'd like to air my views on Virgin's Lure of the Temptress. This is the first virtual theatre game on the Amiga, and it scored highly in all the reviews.

I completed the game today and overall I found it to be very good. The graphics and sound were certainly a cut above the rest, and the concept of virtual theatre makes for a very entertaining game.

The only problem is that I only purchased the game six days ago! I don't consider myself to be a particularly good gamer, just a very dedicated one. To complete a full price game in only six evening sessions, well, to be honest I felt quite cheated.

I'm sure that there are other readers who have completed this game even quicker than I have, and the problem with games of this ilk is that when you finish them you rarely go back to them. I bought Monkey Island 2 and Eye of The Beholder II almost three months ago, and I am nowhere near completing either of them.

What do you think? Are my complaints without foundation, or do you think as I do that Virgin could have done better? I hope to see more virtual theatre games in the future, but I hope they will offer a bit more challenge.

Terry Edge, Hornchurch

Your comments are not without foundation if the number of letters we receive from disappointed game players is anything to go by. With the increased emphasis on graphics these days, it is becoming clear that some games offer little else.

Monkey Island 2 is a perfect example of a product which incorporates both superb gameplay and superb graphics, though I must admit I finished it in less than two weeks with the help of the Gamer cheat page. Other games have enjoyed less success, but given that we are in an early stage of the heavily graphic-based adventures, and that a standard has already been set by the Lucasfilm games, we should see a gradual improvement.

Our Gamer editor, Paul Roundell, assures me that we will in future indicate the lasting appeal rating of this type of adventure. Hope this helps you when the next virtual theatre (whatever that is - Ed) game is reviewed.

Flopped Falcon

I am sure you will be aware of Atari's latest computer, the Falcon. It is obvious that none of the existing Amigas can even hope to rival it, and what I want to know is what do you intend to do about it?

I've got quite a few games for my Amiga and I would prefer it if I could buy a new computer which would still run them, but if the Amiga cannot offer the quality of games and programs that Atari can, I will definitely consider leaving the Amiga for the Falcon.

If this Falcon is all that it's cracked up to be it should be able to emulate the Amiga anyway.

I mean, how can the Amiga 500/600 compete with over 65,000 colours on screen, a palette 262,144 colours, over 50 video modes, high quality genlocking, a blitter, and CD quality sound!

Neil Hudson, Batley

How can Falcon compete with 16.7 million colours, 265,000 on screen in any resolution, a built-in flicker fixer, hard drive interface, massive base of existing software and developers, true multitasking, incredibly fast graphics chips, 2Mb chip RAM, and the Amiga name?

Atari's wunderkind is yet to appear in the shops, yet the A1200 is already on sale, backed up by Commodore's £4 million advertising campaign. First shipments of the machine sold out before they had been delivered and a number of major software houses have already pledged their support.

In short, given the ST's terminally ill market and the delays in production, it is clear that the A1200 will wipe the floor with Falcon.

Fly by night

My copy of Airbus A320 did not load, so I returned it to Thalion in Germany. That was on 9th September and despite another letter on 28th September I have still heard nothing. When I bought A320 I registered with Thalion using the postcard supplied.

How do I get a replacement? Have any of your readers come up against a foreign software supplier which ignores complaints and if so, what did they do? The program is rather pricey to write off, so please help.

Graham M Ross, Largs

If a product fails to function, the consumer should always first return it to the retailer from which it was bought, as this person is legally responsible under law. Assuming you bought A320 direct from Thalion (you don't state whether you did or not), the company should have replaced it, especially as you are a registered user.

A more direct method would be to phone the company in Germany. While this would be expensive, it is more likely to produce results. If all else fails, try your local Trading Standards Officer.

In praise of PD

I am writing to extol the virtues of purchasing PD software. Last year I purchased Footbal League Manager, a brilliant program by Tony McManus, designed to keep a record of any football league table. I duly sent off my £5 fee and was delighted to receive this year's update.

The program now has the facility to update and print out any league together with goal scorers, squads, man of the match, and match comments. In fact, a complete record of all that is relevant in the league.

Mr McManus even went to great lengths to help me with a printing problem I was having. When I told him the disk wouldn't print to my LC-200 printer, a great deal of postal to-ing and fro-ing eventually led to him configuring the disk for me.

The point is, would I have got the same service if I had paid £80 for a commercial program of this type? The answer is no, because there is no commercial program of this type, and the majority of companies don't ant to know anyway.

I have had similar help from Paul Robertshaw of Mental Image, and in both cases Paul and Tony, realising I was new to computing, didn't treat me as if I was thick and gave me loads of expert help.

To anyone reluctant to try PD I would say go ahead and do it. Provided you pay your shareware fees, you will be surprised and delighted with the service you will get.

Brian Ball, Ipswich

As you pojnt out, paying the small shareware registration fees normally pays off many times over, as many authors will be more than happy to discuss their programs with you, keep in touch, and supply upgrades.

Your letter is an excellent reason for all our readers to note where one of our CoverDisk programs is shareware rather than PD or freeware.

One point I would raise is that you're a little hard on commercial companies. many have efficient user registration and upgrade services, some supply regular newsletters on their products, and a growing number are realising the importance of offering quality customer support.

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4

RAM Raiders



Phil South examines memory expansion, the first upgrade most Amiga owners require

The trouble with modern computers, especially the Amiga, is their dependency on RAM. The base level machine is capable of a lot, but it's only when you try to push things a bit that you realise a lot more RAM is needed to really make the machine sing and dance, especially if you are looking at mid to high-level applications.

One problem is that memory can mean a lot of things. RAM stands for Random Access Memory, and although there is a really important reason for it being called this, forget it and concentrate on the word RAM. RAM is the name for the temporary memory space on the Amiga computer, into which programs are loaded before they are run.

Any memory you add to your Amiga is expansion memory or fast RAM, unless added through the A500 Plus or A600 trapdoor, in which case it is chip RAM. Fast RAM is distinct from chip RAM, which is a preset amount of memory used by the computer for the graphics and sound used by the custom chips. The more memory you have, the less space in chip memory is taken up by programs, giving you more leg room for graphics and sound. Chip RAM is usually the base level of RAM you have in the machine when you buy it.

The original Amiga 1000 had 256k of chip RAM and in all could address 8Mb of RAM maximum. The 500 and 2000 had the same 8Mb upper limit, and although later versions of the machines had the fatter Agnus allowing 1Mb of Chip RAM, most of them were 512k Chip machines.

Chips for all

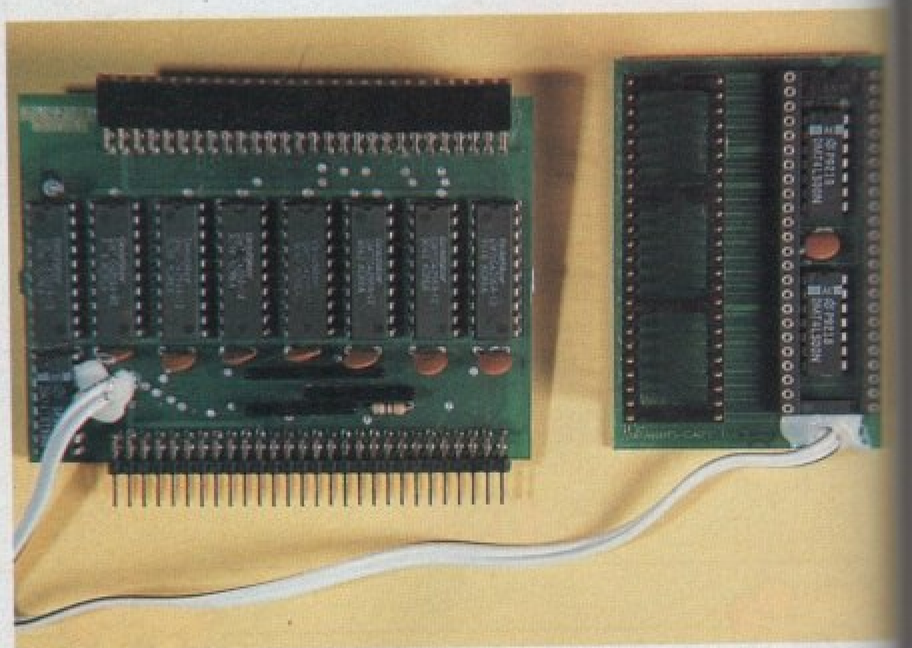
When the 500 Plus was released, the chip RAM limit was fully and finally fixed at 1Mb, but the A600 soon pushed that up to 2Mb. The A1200 also has 2Mb of chip RAM, as does the A4000, and we can look forward to between 4Mb and 8Mb of Chip RAM machines in the not too distant future.

One thing to bear in mind is that even when you have a certain amount of RAM in your machine some of it is eaten up by the system, so when you say you have 1Mb of RAM in your machine, only about 800k of that will be available to you once the machine is booted and ready to rock and roll. So if you have a 2Mb animation which needs a clear 2Mb to run, then you need 3Mb to run it.

It's best to ignore the first 1Mb of any RAM you might have, and think only in terms of the expansion memory as your free memory. This is why Amiga 2000s for example with "8Mb" really have 9Mb on board including the base memory.

There are many different types of RAM expansion. First the traditional trapdoor type, which fits under the trapdoor in the bottom of an A500/500Plus. Next there is the motherboard type, of which there are very few, which fit into a socket on the motherboard. (some trapdoor expanders use a lead plugged into the Gary chip on the motherboard to allow for the extra RAM).

Next there are the DMA slot units which use the slot on the end of an A500 or Plus. These are easiest to fit and give you the most memory. Finally a new beast on the scene is the misnamed "smart card" type, which is a card designed to fit into the PCMCIA slots on A600 and A1200 machines. These can carry memory or even programs, although very few of these special uses for the slot have been revealed.



AMRAM "Megaboard" A500 1Mb

(Evesham Micros £42.99)

The Evesham 1Mb Megaboard is a trapdoor model with a white flying lead containing a small daughter board with a socket for your Gary chip.

Adding RAM to your A500 was always easy, but adding more than the regular 512K upgrade is a little harder.

The Gary chip has to be circumvented in some way, and this is commonly done with a little flying lead and a daughter board which fits into the Gary socket.

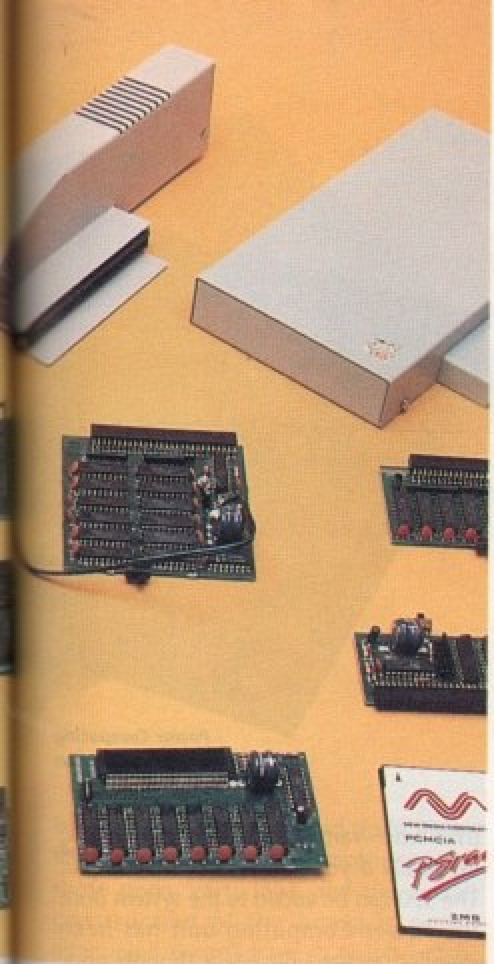
You pop the Gary chip out and insert it in the daughter board. The daughter board goes in the Gary chip slot, and of course the main board goes into the trap door expansion slot.

The trick with this board is that it features a pass through, allowing you to add another board to the circuit, although in the main you are limited to adding another RAM board, possibly a really slim one with a battery backed clock on board, bringing the total memory to 2Mb (512K+512K+1Mb=2Mb!). Just 512k of the RAM in the final configuration is Chip RAM.

A good route to add just a little more RAM to give your old Kickstart 1.3 A500 that extra little push over the cliff for additional graphics capability.

This isn't the best idea for heavy duty animation or 3D rendering, but it does give you access to one or two graphics modes otherwise closed to you as a base level user.

Installation 6
Construction 7
Bang For Bucks 8
Overall 7



How much is enough?

1 Megabyte

Okay for games use, but more technical programs will crash and burn, especially if they are more graphics intensive. Almost all programs will load, but once you start using them to produce professional quality graphics or text you start getting the horrible out of memory errors, at least if you're lucky.

2 Megabyte

More leg room for chip RAM, but still not enough to get really serious. Most of the room you gain is taken up by your system so you only really have about 1.2Mb of free RAM for programs and data. 2Mb makes DPaint fly along a bit smoother but you try loading overscan 16 colour hires pictures and see where that gets you. Memory gets fragged and you meet the guru. 2Mb chip RAM machines are better performers in this range.

4 Megabyte

DTP now becomes possible. It is possible to run such programs in a 1Mb computer, but as the documents get larger the programs start to behave oddly and soon crash. This still happens in 4Mb but far less often.

6 Megabyte

With more memory 3D ray tracing programs start behaving themselves, though for this you'll need a faster processor like 020, 030 or 040, where available. Shifting megabytes of graphics around requires a much faster machine, make no mistake about that.

8 Megabyte

This is Max Headroom as far as 16-bit RAM is concerned. With the full amount of memory addressable by a regular Amiga you will get no crashes due to memory loss, and you put off the fragged memory problems almost indefinitely.

Newer Amigas can address much more memory than this, and attendant with this you'll find they have faster processors too. Check out this month's A1200 review for details.

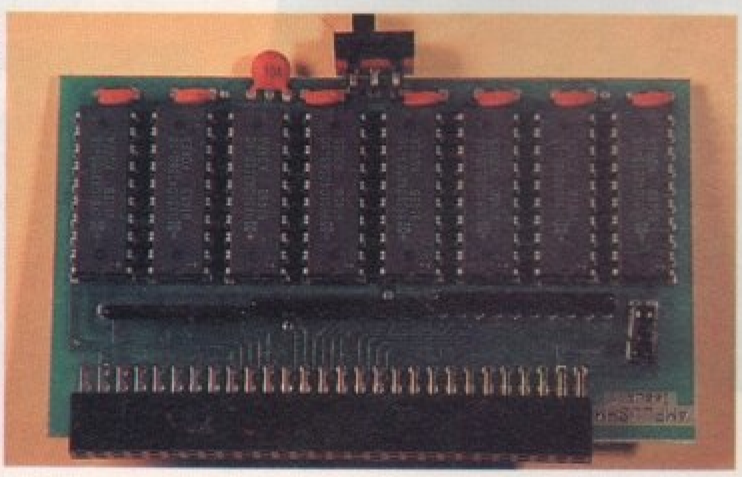
AMPLUS A500+ 1Mb

(Evesham Micros £37.95)

This card is a simple trapdoor alternative to the official Commodore RAM upgrade. No clock or any unnecessary frills, apart from the cut-off switch, which is an easily accessible switch for disabling the RAM, should you need to do so. Easily accessible means that if you leave the trapdoor off you can tilt the machine up and reach in and flip the switch. (Remembering of course to turn the Amiga off before you start to re-configure the amount of memory it's looking for; a quick way to crash and burn!)

Once fitted you have a 2Mb chip RAM Amiga 500 Plus, sufficient to allow the use of more RAM hungry graphics modes but not really enough to go for large 3D rendered objects, or DTP for that matter, other than simple single or double page documents.

Installation7
Construction 7
Bang For Bucks 8
Overall 8



Amplus A500 Plus 1Mb

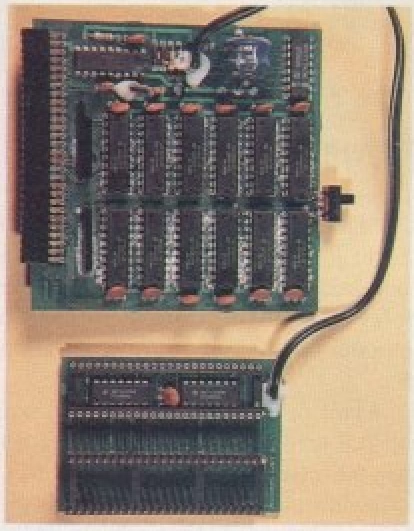
AMRAM A500 1.5Mb

(Evesham Micros £69.99)

An alternative to the 1Mb Megaboard and additional board is the 1.5Mb solution including the extra memory and clock. The board is similar to the Megaboard but is longer and with a black flying lead terminating in the same daughter board for the Gary chip.

The board has no through port but then as it already has the capability which a through port would provide, it doesn't need one. It does however have a disable switch, which like the unit for the A600 mentioned just now means you can turn off the extra RAM physically to allow the execution of software which takes exception to being run in an expanded machine.

Once the unit is fitted you have the full 2Mb of RAM, of which 512K is Chip RAM. This means you have more leg room, but the 512k chip limit still means you will experience some problems with out of memory errors, although certainly less



than with 512k or 1Mb.

(Note: this board is also available unpopulated with clock for £39.95.)

Installation 6
Construction 6
Bang For Bucks 7
Overall 7

AMRAM A500 512k

(Evesham Micros £22.99)

This is a tiny board, which can be used a simple stand-alone 512k upgrade for 512k Amiga 500s, but also finds use as an additional clock and RAM upgrade for systems using the Megaboard 1Mb card with through port.

On the back edge of the card is an on/off switch to switch out the extra RAM for the benefit of programs which can't

➤

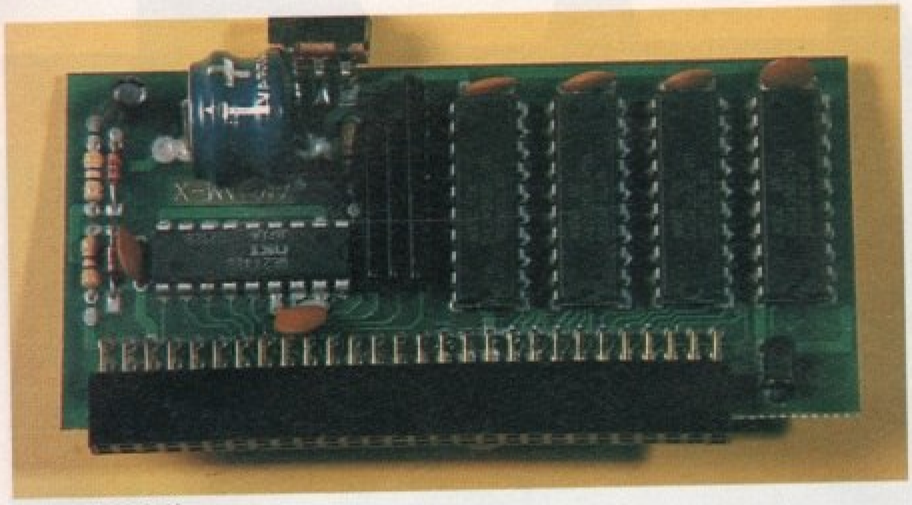
Memory pizza

No matter how much memory you have you will be prey to memory fragmentation. Imagine the Amiga's memory as a big round pizza. (Slurp. Ed) You cut a quarter of it but replace it without eating it, then you cut another quarter of it and replace it. It looks like a whole pizza but the largest slice you can cut from the remaining pieces is a half or a quarter.

Slices

Next you cut another slice amounting to a third of the total pizza, and again replace it on the plate and go on to cut a quarter from the piece which was a third of the total area. Now if you try to cut a slice which is a third of the total area, you can't find a piece big enough to do that. The biggest piece of memory pizza you can cut for use in programs is a quarter (think about it - Ed).

This is what the memory of the Amiga is like; apportion a piece of memory for a big piece of data and you can replace it after use, but you'll never re-integrate it with the rest of memory, unless you re-boot. This is why having a lot of memory is a good thing, because it allows you to go for longer before the frag monster catches up with you, or you run out of sufficient continuous (all in one slice) available memory.



Amram A500 512k

handle it. This is part of a interesting modular system, and it seems to me that Evesham have gone out of their way to ensure that there's an upgrade path for everyone along the way from a simple 512k doubler right up to 2Mb mini-muscle machine.

The A500 really needs the extra RAM, but as previously stated the 512K Chip RAM limitation will get in the way of real power user computing. (Also available without clock for £17.99.)

Installation 8
Construction 7
Bang For Bucks 7
Overall 7

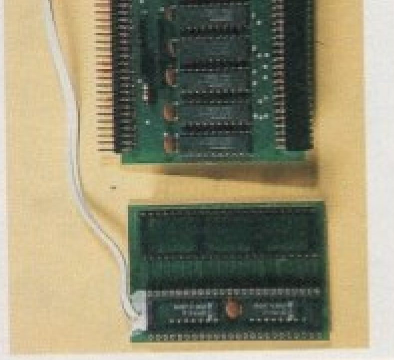
AMRAM A600 1Mb

(Evesham Micros £44.99)

The A600 version of the AMRAM for A500 Plus, with the same benefits. A neater construction to fit the more petite A600 trapdoor, and the same disable switch as before, but this time mounted underneath the circuit board as there isn't any clearance for the thing to poke out like it does on the other designs. (Most of the internals in a A600 are so closely packed you'd have trouble sliding a cigarette paper between them!)

The only real difference between this and the A500 Plus version is the shorter and fatter edge connector, but again this brings your machine up to 2Mb chip RAM. The unit has an on board clock, so you can set this and the battery will keep the time ticking over even when the computer isn't on.

Installation 7
Construction 6
Bang For Bucks 7
Overall 6



Power Computing A600 1Mb

(Power Computing £49.95)

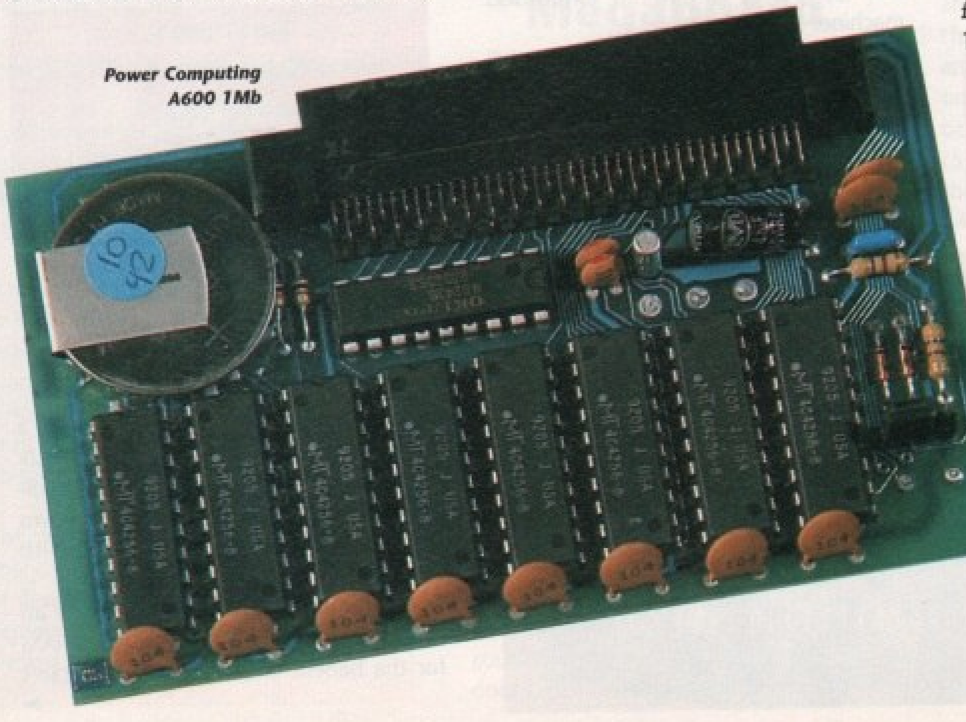
A slimmer board than the Evesham Micros job, due to the use of a Lithium coin-sized watch battery rather than the bulky cylindrical Varta job. A 1Mb upgrade for the A600 giving you 2Mb chip.

Board construction is excellent, and the PCB itself is a cool blue colour rather than the usual green.

The documentation in almost all the Power Computing stuff is very nicely printed and readable, although confusingly the docs for both this unit and the A600 Automatic Kickstart Switcher are in the same book. The A600 instructions take up a single page, so wouldn't it have been better to use a single sheet of paper? It's a very nice little book, though.

Installation 7
Construction 8
Bang For Bucks 8
Overall 8

Power Computing A600 1Mb



Power Computing A500/A500+ 2Mb

(Power Computing £109)

This unit claps onto the end of the A500 using the expansion port designed for the A590 hard disk/memory expansion unit. It doesn't give you a hard disk, but it does give you the full 2Mb of memory.

Along with the 512k base memory and the 512k expansion memory which you may have in your machine already, this gives you 3Mb in total, 2.5Mb of fast RAM and 512k of Chip RAM.

The unit is a big flat metal box containing the familiar blue circuit board and room for 8Mb of fast RAM. The test Unit was a 2Mb unit and so only four of the upright memory chips were fitted, and it doesn't take a mathematical genius to figure out that these are 512k RAM chips.

Loose 1x4 ZIP chips (£14.95 each) for the user to add themselves to the system are available from Power Computing. That's four per Mb, and so to completely populate the board to 8Mb you'd need another 12 chips (16 in total) costing you an extra £179.45. The amount of RAM on board is set by a couple of jumpers on the circuit board and these must be changed when you add more RAM.

This is one route for the real power user who wants to take it to the max[imum], especially if you already have the A590. The 590 can be added to the system once the Power Computing unit has been installed as the unit has a though port, enabling you to get the benefits of the expansion slot with the benefits of maximum RAM.



Power Computing A500/A500 Plus

No clock on board, but then you can fit one in the trapdoor anyway, so you don't need it. The installation is a piece of cake, as you merely slap the thing into the slot and sure enough the next time you switch on the machine you have 2Mb more RAM! Magical.

Installation 8
Construction 9
Bang For Bucks 9
Overall 9

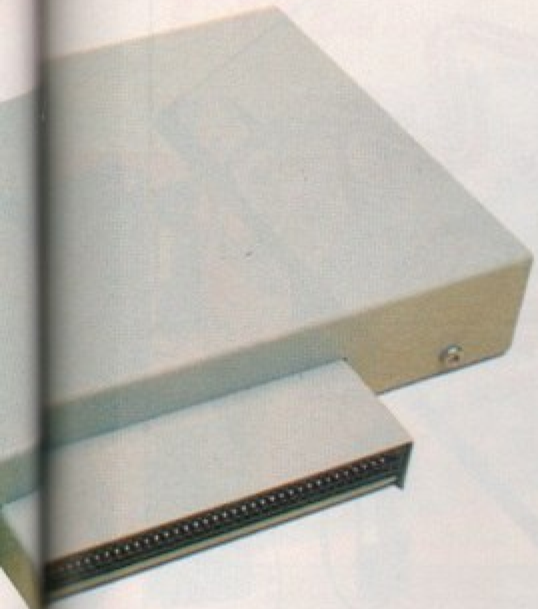
Power Computing A500 1.5Mb

(Power Computing £75)

Another one of these "go straight to 2Mb, do not pass go, do not collect £200" jobs. The board Includes a full 1.5Mb of fast RAM so you can slide th[e]

Power Computing A500 1.5Mb





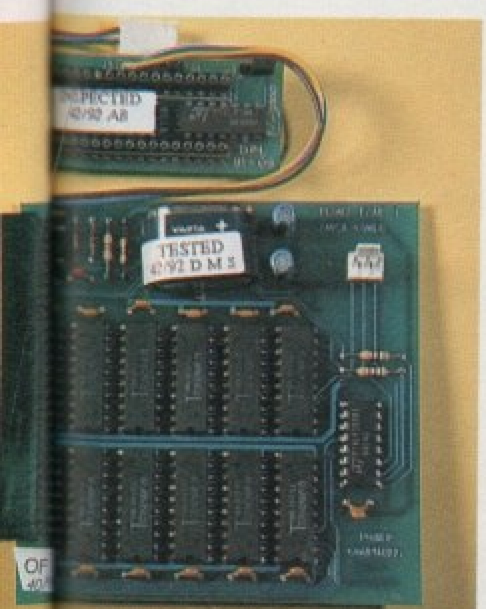
baby into your trapdoor and really smoke it. The on board clock is another one of those porky Varta jobs, and the overall construction of the board is good, although it doesn't have an on/off switch. (This is possible in software anyway, but this isn't as concrete a solution as a hardware switch.)

The docs give details on installation and the steps required for a machine packing a fatter Agnes to be expanded to 1Mb of Chip RAM, once the 1.5Mb board is installed.

This involves the soldering of a wire onto the motherboard of your Amiga and shouldn't be attempted unless you are very brave and/or stupid, or know what you're doing. Older pre-1989 1.3 machines will not be fitted with the fatter Agnes anyway, so this may not be an option for you.

With the modification in place the first 1Mb of any memory configuration you try will be Chip memory.Full instructions about the solder job are included, and the bit of wire and jumper plug you need to do it, plus a disk of RAM utils as well! Nice one, Power.

Installation 7
Construction 8
Bang For Bucks 9
Overall 8



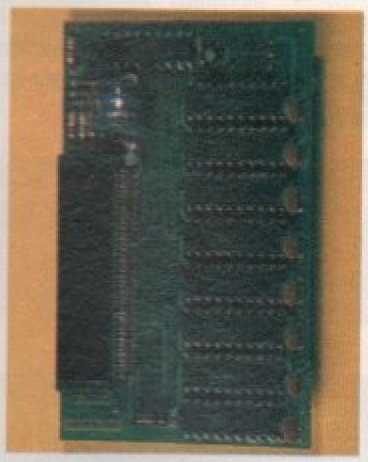
Power Computing A500 1Mb

(Power Computing £45)

Similar idea to the Evesham 1Mb board, with the same type of through port and Gary board. This model has the added bonus of the same instructions for upping chip RAM on fatter Agnus machines, and the same little lead for you to do it with.

No battery backed clock here, but you can easily add one using the through port, bringing the available memory to 1.5Mb if you just add this unit or 2Mb including additional 512k with clock. The Chip RAM will be just 512K, unless you make the previously mentioned tricky and dangerous hardware mod (on Blue Peter they'd tell you to get an adult to help you). You get a disk of RAM utils to add to the value. Can you spell value for money, boys and girls?

Installation 6
Construction 8
Bang For Bucks 8
Overall 8

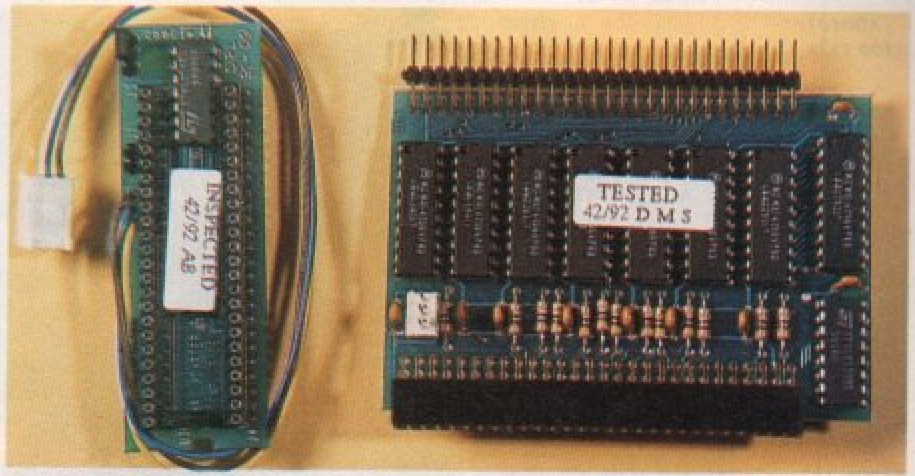


AX601 A600 1Mb

(Ashcom £44.95)

Another tidy job from Ashcom, this time the A600 version. Also available in a version with or without clock (again the sans clock version being £2 cheaper) the review unit sported the clock and big flattened cylinder Varta battery. No switch on this version, leaving you to switch the RAM out by software means if you need to. This is a good basic 1Mb unit, taking you up to the magic 2Mb with 1Mb of that being chip memory in the A600. Nice tidy design and good construction.

Installation 7
Construction 7
Bang For Bucks 6
Overall 7



Power Computing A500 1Mb

Jargon Buster

Chip RAM

Chip RAM is the rea of memory used by the Amiga's custom graphics and sound chips, and is therefore vitally important for all sorts of graphics and animation use, sound sampling, and so on. The more chip RAM a machine has, the more flexible it is in terms of power applications.

Expansion slot

Officially called the DMA slot, this is a slot in the left hand cheek plate of an Amiga 500 and 500 Plus. Originally designed for the A590 expansion device, the slot has found favour with third party developers for expansion devices of all shapes and sizes, even big RAM expanders.

Fast RAM

Any memory in your current configuration additional to the base (chip) memory you got with your machine. So called because it is faster in operation than chip RAM.

Kilobyte

Usually abbreviated to k. A kilobyte is 1024 bytes, the standard unit of RAM.

Megabyte

Also known as Mb or even Meg. A chunk of 1024 kilobytes of memory, in other words a bit more than a standard floppy disk's worth of space.

PCMCIA

The format of the credit card slot on the side of the A600/A1200 machines, and naturally enough the cards which use it.

RAM

An acronym for Random Access Memory. You can read it, you can write to it. You can spend hundreds of quid on it. Wonderful stuff!

ROM

Read Only Memory. Computer chips containing the operating system of the computer which cannot be written to like RAM, only read from.

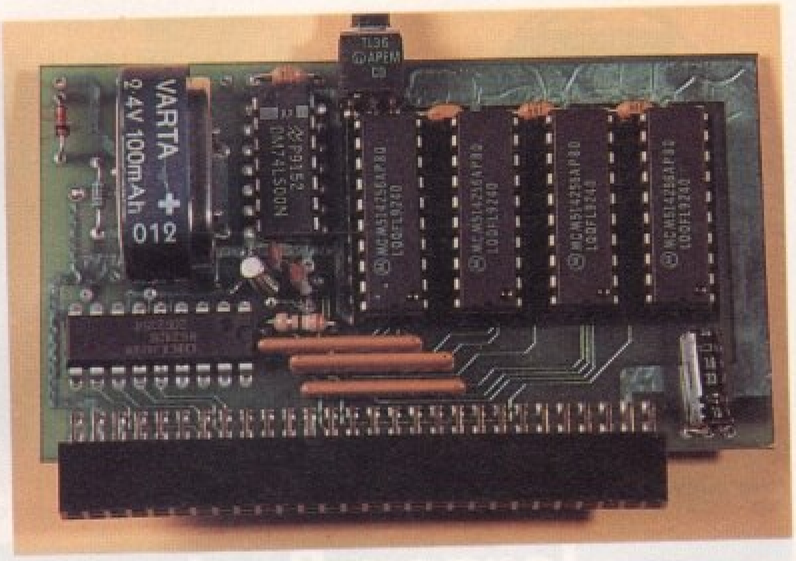
Trapdoor

The usual memory expansion slot on an A500 is underneath the machine in a little trapdoor. This is the most heaviley used A500 expansion method.

Unpopulated

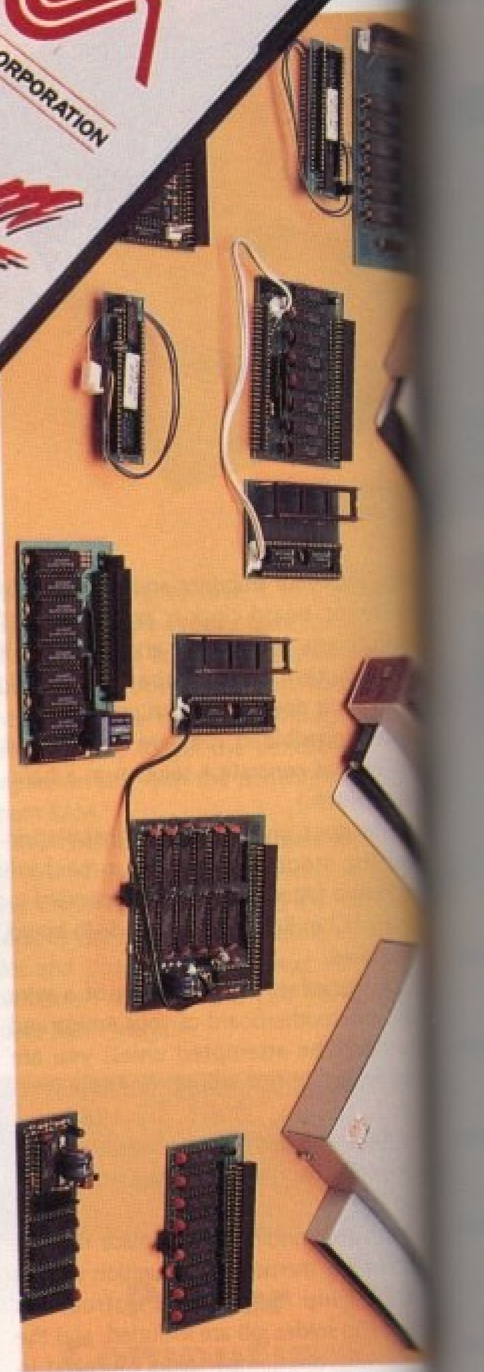
A memory board with no memory chips on it. Pretty useless, eh? Cheap though if you have existing chips or know where you can buy them cheap.

ADD501 A500 512K



New Media Corp PCMCIA 2Mb





ADDAX A500/A500+ 2Mb

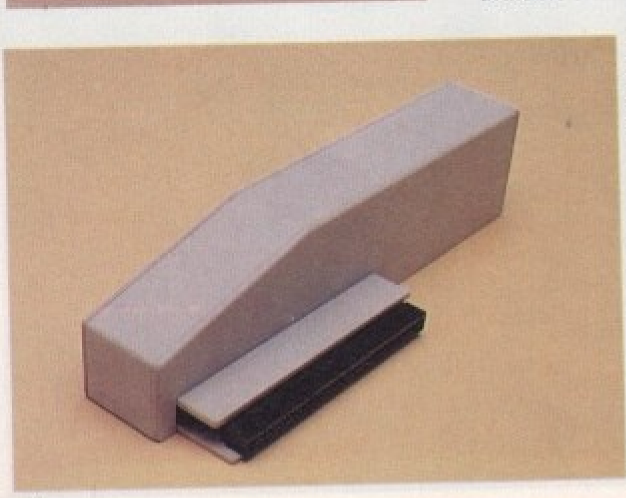
(Ashcom £115)

This is a 2Mb external device which can also be expanded up to 8Mb. Basic configuration allows for use with other peripherals by way of the through port and comes fitted with 2Mb of RAM.

More chips can be added to bring the configuration up to 8Mb, but each time more RAM is added jumpers have to be altered on the main board of your ADDAX. You can buy the box with more RAM on board from the start, with the 4Mb version being £165 and the fully populated 8Mb version running out at £265.

Construction is very solid, though the casing is plastic and takes a bit of prising to get into. Undoing the screws doesn't release the cover, you have to bend the plastic, which I have to say I wasn't at all happy about. On the upside, though, the unit is the same size and shape as the end of an A500 and only about 1.5 inches wide, and so it's certainly more sleek and good looking than the functional but frankly pug-ugly Power Computing unit.

Installation 8
Construction 8
Bang For Bucks 9
Overall 8



Addax A500/ A500 Plus 2Mb

ADD501 A500 512k

(Ashcom £19.95)

This tiny unit is a 512k expander for the A500, either for stand alone use or for augmenting a 1Mb board with through port. There is a clock on board (the version without clock is £2 cheaper) and a disable switch for killing the RAM should you happen across a program which doesn't like fast RAM.

Unlike the other boards which have cheap slide switches, the Ashcom unit has a nice positive stem switch. The battery is the by now familiar Varta job used on most of the other units with clocks. Constructions quality was very good on the review unit, and the board design very tidy.

Installation 8
Construction 8
Bang For Bucks 7
Overall 8

New Media Corp PCMCIA 2Mb

(Calculus £129.99)

A new idea, at least they've not been available until now, is the RAM card for fitting in the PCMCIA slot in a A600 (and recently of course the Amiga 1200). In a stunningly tiny package the size of a credit card you get a full 2Mb of extra memory, and it's installed in a second without even touching the rest of your machine.

This is the future of RAM expansion, to be sure, but don't lean on it when it's in or you'll snap it! (Just kidding!) There's no need for a disable switch, because if you don't want to use it you can simply yank it out .

Power must, of course, be off as the card is slotted into the motherboard and is part of the circuit. Ripping it out without powering down is like doing major surgery without anaesthetic. Yup, crash and burn, with possible permanent damage. A 4Mb version also exists, priced at £199.99.

Installation 9
Construction 9
Bang For Bucks 9
Overall 9

Shopping list

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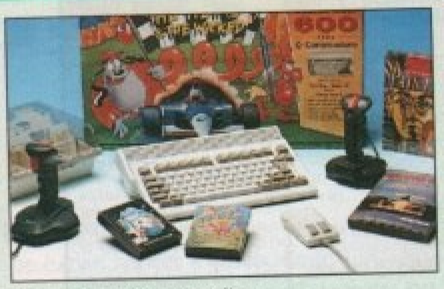
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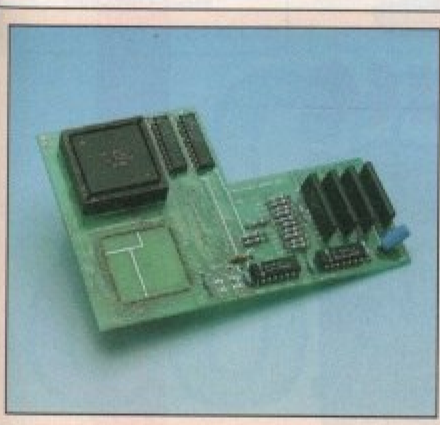
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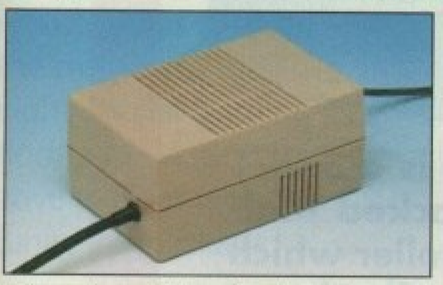
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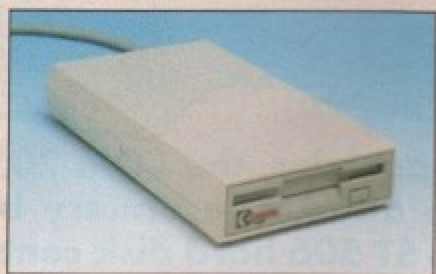
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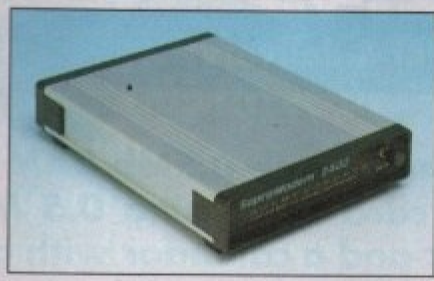
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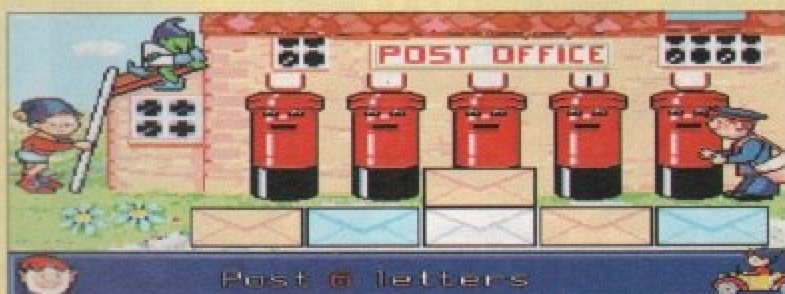
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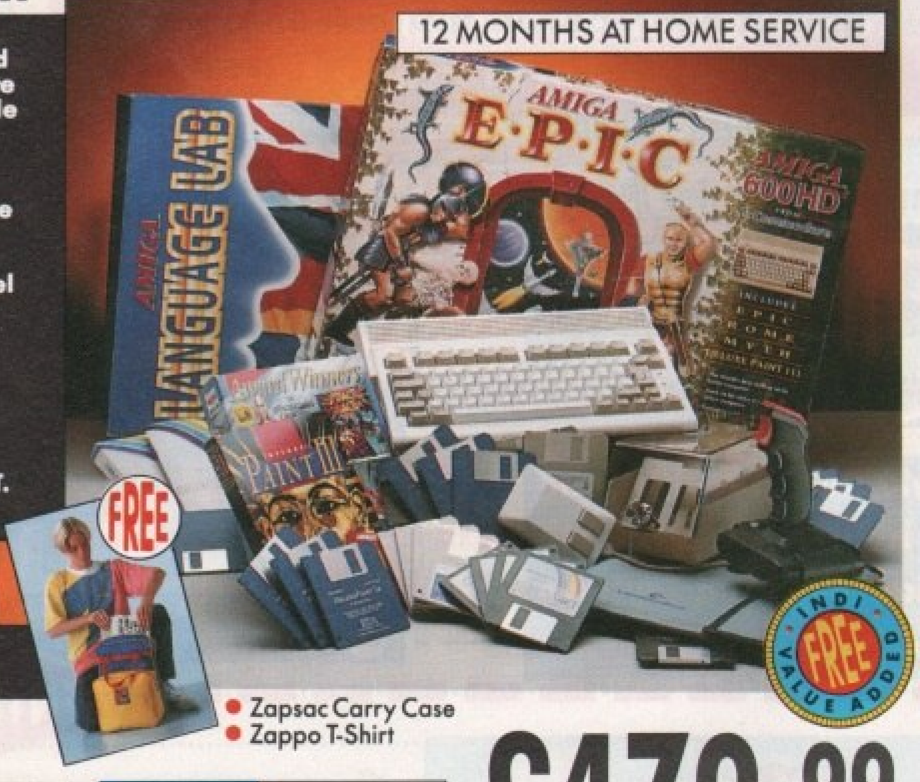
Once again Commodore have put together a winning theme pack to complement the already popular Amiga A600.
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1084S COLOUR/STEREO MONITO



INDI PRICE £189.99

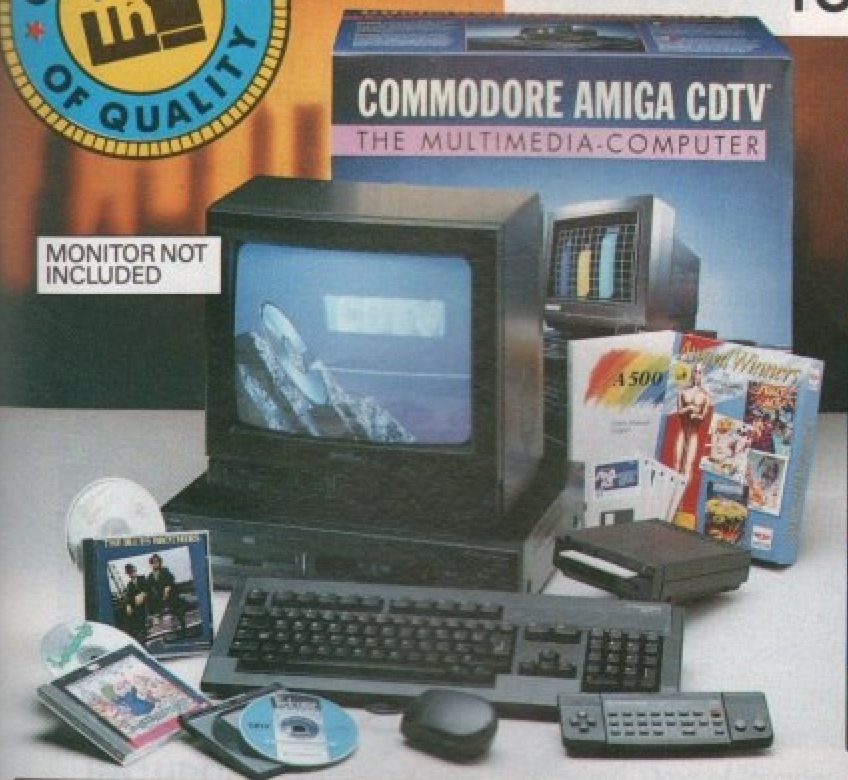
Commodore's own Amiga Monitor. Designed solely for use with the Amiga range of computers. With its ergonomic design, Hi-res graphics display and stereo sound capabilities, the 1084S will really bring your Amiga to life.

Apart from offering this product at a very competitive price INDI are including two great software products totally free of charge

INDI VALUE ADDED FREE
- Days of Thunder (Driving Simulation) £19.99
- Night Breed (or alternative exciting game) £19.99

AMIGA CDTV | THE MULTIMEDIA COMPUTER

TOTAL HOME ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM



MONITOR NOT INCLUDED

FREE!

AUDIO
Blues Brothers (CD Audio) £12.99

AMIGA
Pipemania ● Populous
Kickoff 2 ● Space Ace
£122.52

MULTI MEDIA
Lemmings CDTV
£34.99

GOLDSTAR 14" REMOTE TV/MONITOR FEATURED AVAILABLE SEPARATELY AT **£179.99**

INDI PRICE **£489.99**

The problem with any new product is that it always takes time for everyone to realise its full potential. CDTV is no exception and in our opinion everything we have read does a pretty poor job of explaining just what CDTV can do and why it is so exciting.

THE INDI GUIDE TO CDTV

IT'S A CD PLAYER —Yes, it will play all your Primal Scream, Pavarotti, Pink Floyd and any other CD you care to mention in superb high quality stereo, with remote infra red control.
IT'S AN AMIGA —Plug in the keyboard, switch on the external disk drive and the colossal range of inexpensive Amiga software can be used on your CDTV.
IT'S A MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM —Just imagine, stereo sound, images and text all on screen. It asks a question, you respond, it responds — truly interactive! Each CD disc holds hundreds of megabytes of data with instant optical access. The whole of Hutchinson's Encyclopedia fits onto 1 disc. This interactive system is a unique aid for Education, Business or Leisure. The future is here!

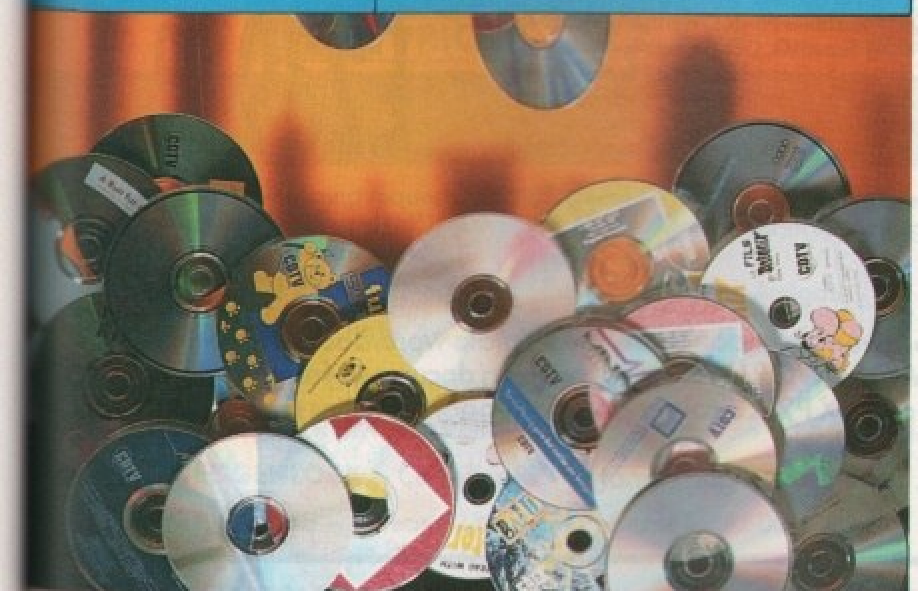
PACK CONTENTS AS STANDARD
- Amiga CDTV Player
- CDTV keyboard
- CDTV 1411 3.5" Disc Drive
- CDTV Infra red remote controller
- CDTV wired mouse
- CDTV Welcome Disc
- Manuals
- Fred Fish CDTV

INDI VALUE ADDED
- Lemmings CDTV (£34.99)
- Blues Brothers (£12.99)
- Pipemania, Populous, Kickoff 2, Space Ace (£122.52)

INDI FREE VALUE ADDED

CDTV CONNECTS DIRECTLY TO YOUR TV SET

CDTV | SOFTWARE



If you already own a CDTV or are just about to purchase one you'll be pleased to know that INDI stock probably the largest and most comprehensive list of CDTV software in the country. Below is a list of top selling titles we are offering at very competitive prices. For more details please phone our sales team. (Prices include postage).

EDUCATION	
A Bun for Barney	24.99
Asterix and Son English	19.99
NASA The 25th Year	19.99
The Paper Bag Princess	29.99
Thomas's Snow Suit	29.99
Tale of Peter Rabbit	34.99
My Paint	24.99
Cinderella	34.99
MUSIC	
Music Maker	31.99
Remix	24.99
REFERENCE	
Dr Wellman	49.99
Guinness World of Records	31.99
Illustrated Holy Bible	24.99
Electronic Cook Book	29.99

ENTERTAINMENT	
Defender of The Crown	24.99
Battle Chess	34.99
Battle Storm	24.99
Classic Board Games	29.99
Hound of Baskervilles	24.99
Psycho Killer	24.99
Trivial Pursuit	45.99
Wrath of Demon	24.99
Basketball	24.99
Dinosaurs For Hire	14.99
All Dogs Go To Heaven	29.99
Raffles	29.99
Prehistorik	24.99
Town With No Name	29.99
Team Yankee	29.99
Snoopy	29.99
Sim City	24.99

AMIGA CDTV | EXTERNAL HARD DISK DRIVE

You've got the CDTV, you've got the keyboard and floppy disk drive – for a total computer solution all that's needed is an ultra-fast hard disk drive. The CDTV-HD unit boasts a massive 65Mb of hard disk storage with lightning fast access times through its SCSI interface. The unit comes complete with Workbench 1.3 and all necessary cables.



INDI PRICE **£349.99**

ACCESSORIES

CDTV Starter Pack – Includes CDTV, Remote Control, Hutchinsons, Lemmings & Welcome Disk CD's	£379.99
A570 External CD drive for the A500 & A500+	£349.99
MEGACHIP – 1Mb ChipRAM Upgrade for CDTV	£159.99
CDTV Keyboard (black)	£49.99
CDTV 3.5" External Floppy Drive	£49.99
ENCORE SCSI Controller + Internal Mount Kit	£109.99
CDTV Internal Genlock	£149.99
CDTV Remote Mouse	£49.99
GOLDSTAR TV/Monitor with Remote Control	£179.99
SCART TV/Monitor Lead (inc. stereo phono lead)	£14.99

Panasonic *Quiet* Colour Printing

We researched the colour printer market in great depth to find a colour printer good enough to cope with Amiga's powerful graphic output, yet at an affordable price.
We found the perfect printer in the Panasonic KX-P2180+KX-P2123 quiet printers.
We then considered that if you were going to buy a Panasonic printer, you would probably need a quality word processing package to use with it. We found that too, in 'Wordworth', yet at a retail price of £129.99 we thought that might be a little too expensive on top of your printer purchase! So together with Panasonic we decided to give a copy of 'Wordworth' free with every Panasonic printer. How's that for added value?

Panasonic KX-P2180



The new Panasonic KX-P2180 9 pin quiet colour printer. Produces crisp clear text in mono or in 7 glorious colours with new quiet technology. The new KX-P2180 is typically 15dBA quieter in operation, than the competition.

- **Fast Printing Speeds** 192CPS Draft and 38 CPS NLQ
- **Colour Printing** 7 colour palette (blue, red, green, yellow, violet, magenta and black)
- **QuietPrinting** Super quiet 45-48dBa sound level (most matrix printers are typically in excess of 60dBA)
- **6 Resident Fonts** Over 6,100 type styles using Courier, Prestige, Bold PS, Roman, Script and Sans Serif Fonts
- **3 Paper Paths** Paper handling from bottom, top and rear for total flexibility
- **1 Year Warranty** For total peace of mind

INDI PRICE £199.99

Panasonic KX-P2123



The new high performance Panasonic KX-P2123 24 pin. Quiet colour printer offers leading edge quiet printing technology at an affordable price.

- **Fast Printing Speeds** 192 CPS draft, 64 CPS LQ and 32 CP SLQ.
- **Colour Printing** 7 colour palette (blue, red, green, yellow, violet, magenta and black)
- **QuietPrinting** Super quiet 43.5-46kBA sound level (most matrix printers are typically in excess of 60dBA)
- **7 Resident Fonts** Over 152,000 type styles using Super LQ, Courier Prestige, Bold PS, Roman, Script and Sans Serif Fonts
- **24 PIN Diamond Printhead** High performance and high quality output
- **1 Year Warranty** for total peace of mind.

INDI PRICE £239.99

EXCLUSIVE TO INDI

*WORDWORTH — COMPLETELY FREE!

WITH PANASONIC QUIET PRINTERS

The writers choice. The ultimate word processor for AMIGA computers. Wordworth is undoubtedly the ultimate word/document processor for the full range of AMIGA computers. The graphical nature of WORDWORTH makes producing documents faster and easier, with the enhanced printing fonts (including full Panasonic KX P2180 and KX P2123 colour printing support), Collins spell checker and Thesaurus, no other word processor comes close.
"Without doubt this is one of the best document processors for the AMIGA, Today." (Amiga Format).

NORMAL RRP £129.99 inc. vat

Panasonic PRINTER ACCESSORIES

Following the outstanding response to the Panasonic printer range we are now in a position to offer new and existing Panasonic printer owners a complete range of accessories saving £££'s on recommended prices.

Panasonic Colour Ribbon 6 Pack
6×Colour Ribbons for the KX-P2180 & KX-P2123
RRP £119.99
INDI PRICE £89.99

Panasonic Ribbon Pack 2×Black & 4×Colour Ribbons for the KX-P2180 & KX-P2123
RRP £99.99
INDI PRICE £69.99

Panasonic Sheet Feeder
Automatic A4 Sheet Feeder for the KX-P2123 & KX-P2180 printers. Holds 80 sheets paper.
RRP £89.99
INDI PRICE £79.99

KX-P2180/KX-P2123 Deluxe Accessory Pack
Pack Contains: • Automatic Sheet Feeder • 2×Black Ribbons • 2×Colour Ribbons • 1×Dust Cover • 2 Piece Printer Stand
RRP £169.99
INDI PRICE £132.99

AMSTRAD NOTEPAD



The new Amstrad Notepad Computer couldn't be easier to use because you simply follow the instructions on the screen as you go along. Has built-in Wordprocessor, 48,000 word spell checker, Calculator, Diary, World Time Clock, Address & Telephone book, BBC BASIC, and weighs less than a kilo (2.2lbs)

PCMCIA MEMORY CARDS FOR AMSTRAD NOTEPAD
64K **£45.99** 128K **£57.99**
256K **£79.99**
512K **£129.99**
1Mb **£179.99**

INDI PRICE £199.99

AMSTRAD FAXPHONE



Fully featured hands-free phone that can send and receive faxes and can even make copies of letters and documents. It's a group 3 fax machine, has 20 memories, 9 one-touch dialling keys and Mercury compatability.

INDI PRICE £299.99

AMIGA A1500 DEALS



The A1500 is the ultimate home computer for the whole family and is designed to cover every computing requirement. INDI are able to offer you exclusive deals on this outstanding product in various configurations and bundles (see options on opposite page).
All configurations come complete with the following software and accessories:-

FEATURES:
- Fully functional keyboard with numeric pad separate from CPU
- Includes 2×3½" disk drives as standard with 5¼" Disk Bay.
- Integral memory and card expansion capabilities (most cost effective expansion route)
- Work bench 2.00 and Kickstart 2.04.

CONTENTS:
- Keyboard, mouse, reference manual, Puzznic, Toki, Elf (Games), D Paint III (Graphics Package), Home Accounts, The Works (Platinum edition: Wordpro, Spreadsheet, Database) Joystick

AMIGA A1500 FEATURED (see photograph above) • 52 Mb SCSI Hard Disk • 1084'S Monitor & Panasonic KX-P2123 24 pin colour printer.

INCLUDED FREE Amiga Vision, Nightbreed, Days of Thunder, Wordworth Worth £268.99

INDI VALUE ADDED FREE
- Amiga Vision (authoring software) worth £99.00

INDI FREE VALUE ADDED

FROM **£499.00**

Amiga A1500, complete with FREE Amiga Vision (worth £99.00) — INDI PRICE £499.99	Amiga A1500, Complete Pack as detailed above — INDI PRICE £1159.99

AMIGA & CDTV ACCESSORIES

Due to overwhelming requests for Amiga and CDTV Accessories we are pleased to offer the following products with the usual INDI guarantee of Quality and Service, not forgetting the INDI price benefits!!! – Great gifts at Christmas.

ZAPPO FLOPPY – External 3.5" drive suitable for all Amigas	£44.99
ZAPPO 601NC – 512K Amiga 600 RAM upgrade (no clock)	£29.99
ZAPPO 601C – 1Mb Amiga 600 RAM upgrade (with clock)	£49.99
MULTI START II ROM SHARER + 1.3 ROM – Use both 1.3 & 2.04 Kickstart ROMs	£44.99
ROCTEC GENLOCK – Cost effective video overlay for all Amigas	£69.99
SUPRA RX 2Mb – External 2Mb RAM upgrade for A500/500+. Can be increased up to 8Mb	£159.99
2Mb SMARTCARD – Credit card style RAM card utilising A600/A1200 PCMCIA SLOT	£129.99
4Mb SMARTCARD – For A600/A1200, maximum RAM with a lifetime guarantee!	£199.99
COMMODORE C64 & 1541 DISK DRIVE PACK – The worlds best selling home computer complete with disk drive and software pack	£159.99
REPLACEMENT POWER SUPPLY – for the Amiga A500/A600/A1200	£24.99
AMIGA 3000 – With 2Mb RAM, 120Mb Hard Disk, Publishers Choice, Amiga Vision	£1526.32
AMIGA 4000 – With 6Mb RAM, 120Mb Hard Disk & Amiga Vision	£2348.82
COMMODORE 1960 – 14" High resolution monitor for use with A3000 & A4000	£369.99
Or if bought with A3000 or A4000	£351.99
OPAL VISION 24-BIT GRAPHIC SYSTEM – For the Amiga 1500/2000/3000/4000. Launched to rave reviews, the most amazing graphics enhancement for your Amiga at an unbelievable price.	£699.99

★ INDI TELESALES ★
TEL 0606 43860 · FAX 0606 43825

INDI DIRECT MAIL

AFTER SALES AND SPECIALIST SERVICE

All products are guaranteed for 12 months. Some products carry a 12 month at home service/repair guarantee (where indicated).
In the unlikely event that any product purchased from INDI arrives at your home faulty, we will collect from your home and replace the product completely free of charge.
If you own an AMIGA 1500 or 3000 and would like to expand its hard disk or memory capability or add any other peripheral INDI can offer you a complete door to door configuration service together with an additional 12 months Back to INDI warranty. Why not ask for a quote?

Products advertised represent a small sample of our instock range. A complete price list is available on request.

All products purchased come with a complete list of all products available from INDI with special customer loyalty offers.

AS PART OF OUR POLICY OF CONTINUAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT, WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE SPECIFICATIONS OF PRODUCTS ADVERTISED. PLEASE CONFIRM CURRENT SPECIFICATION AT THE TIME OF ORDERING.

PRICES ARE VALID FOR MONTH OF PUBLICATION ONLY

HOW TO ORDER

BY POST — simply fill in the coupon below.
BY PHONE — ring 0606 43860 where your call will be answered by one of our INDI sales team. After 6.00pm each day your call will be answered by answerphone. If you would like to place an order have all details at hand including Credit Card. The message will guide you through your order.

SEND YOUR ORDER TO:
INDI DIRECT MAIL
FIRST FLOOR OFFICES,
85 WITTON STREET,
NORTHWICH
CHESHIRE CW9 5DW

AC 12/92

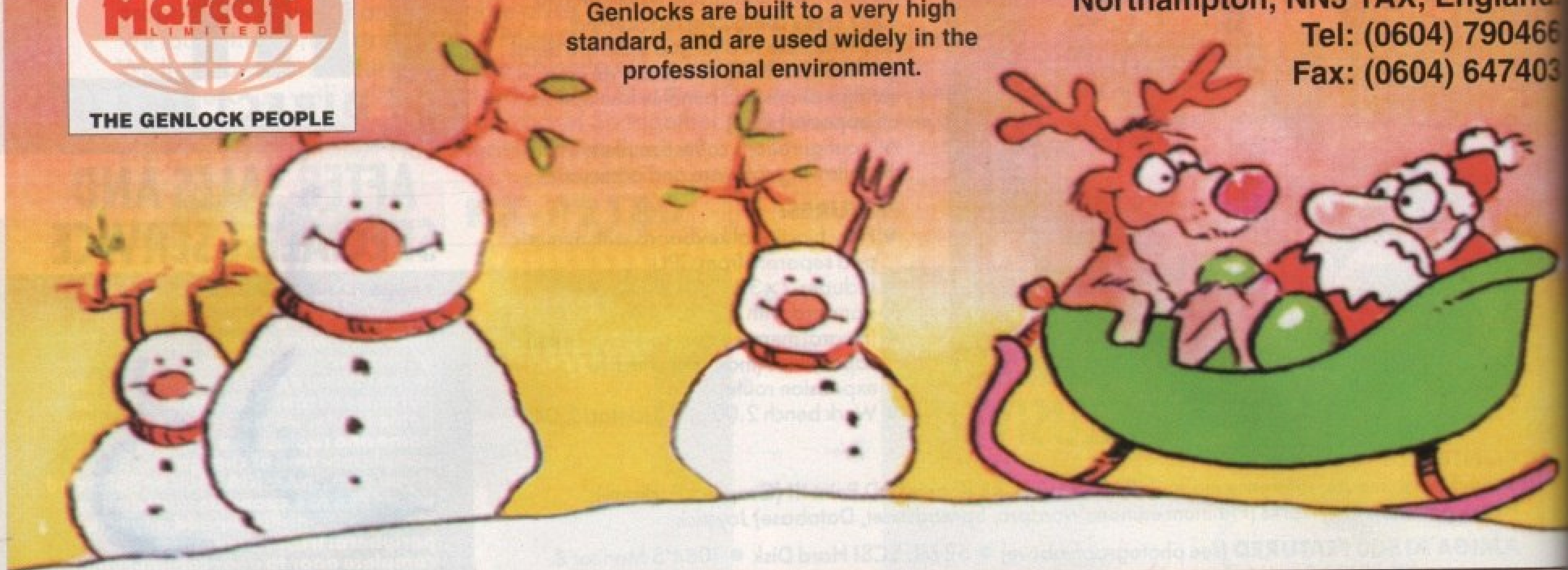
Please send ....
Price .... + Delivery
I enclose cheque/PO for £.......
or charge my Access/Visa No.
....
Expiry date /
Signature ....
Send to Name......................
Address ....
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Daytime Tel.........................
Postcode ....

MARCAM LIMITED

THE GENLOCK PEOPLE

Do you want to overlay computer graphics or titles onto your videos? If so, you will need a Genlock. Rendale Genlocks are built to a very high standard, and are used widely in the professional environment.

62 Tenter Road,
Moulton Park Business Centre,
Northampton, NN3 1AX, England.
Tel: (0604) 790466
Fax: (0604) 647403



RENDALE 8802 £139 –

The Rendale range of Amiga Genlocks begins with the 8802. This is a Genlock, which, when attached to an Amiga computer and a suitable video system, will allow you to mix video and computer graphics. It offers all the functions that you need, such as:

* RGB feed through, allowing for a preview monitor.
* High quality output video, which in default mode provides video with overlaid computer graphics.

RENDALE 8802 FMC £178 –

It can be supplied with a device which will allow you to fade between computer graphics and the video source, and also a mode control unit so that you can move between Amiga only, video only, background mode and keyhole modes 1 & 2.

RENDALE SUPER-8802 £499 –

The Rendale Super-8802 is a development of the basic 8802 unit, it performs the same functions, but has the added capability of also working with Super-VHS signals. The unit will allow the user to cross fade between the Amiga and video signal. In addition, some basic wipe patterns are provided, and also a fade to black option. Mode control is also provided via hardware.

NEW! RENDALE FMC £45–fitted

8802 FMC Unit

This is a brand new piece of kit which will improve the capabilities of the popular Rendale 8802 Genlock. This unit allows you to cross fade between the Amiga and video signals, so that you can gently fade computer titles in and out. Also, the ability to switch between the various modes offered by the 8802 is provided. The required mode is selected by a push switch, giving smooth, flicker free transformations.

The FMC unit does need to be soldered into the 8802, we can do this at our factory if required.

8802 UPGRADES £45 – £400 –

UPGRADE PATHS

Rendale Genlocks are designed to be flexible, and the ability of your Genlock to grow with your system was deemed to be of paramount importance in our design process.

As a consequence, existing 8802 users can follow one of two upgrade paths. The fade and mode control unit (FMC unit) can be purchased independently, and fitted to your 8802 genlock by our engineer. We would only require your unit for around two days.

The other upgrade path is the move from a purely composite 8802 to the Super-8802. This can also be done simply, although we do have to perform the upgrade work at our factory. We would only require your unit for around two days.

PRICES INCLUDE VAT AND DELIVERY. ACCESS AND MASTERCARD ACCEPTED.

INTRODUCING the latest quality Amiga products from

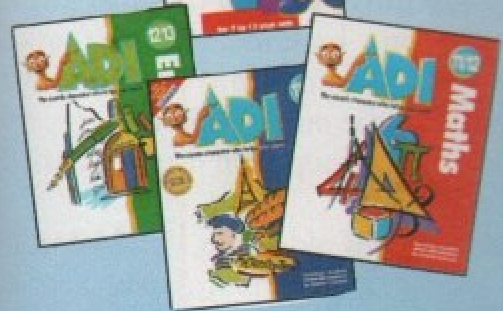
europress SOFTWARE ***...the market leaders in educational software***



- **FUN SCHOOL 4** – Three packages to suit young people from 5 to 11 years. Each contains six easy-to-use programs aimed to stimulate learning while being challenging and fun, following National Curriculum guidelines. Page 2 →

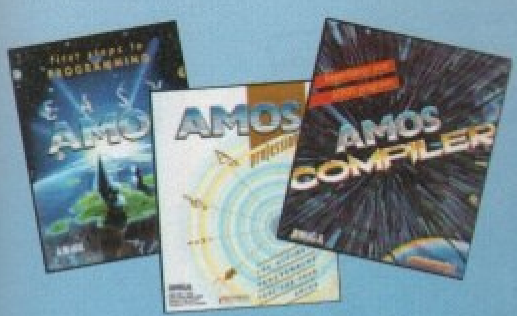


- **FUN SCHOOL SPECIALS** – A series of three packages to support the Fun School 4 series, by adding depth to spelling, maths and creative skills. Page 3 →



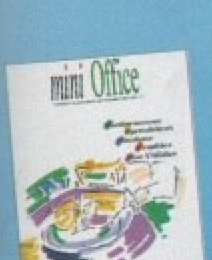
- **ADI** – This extraterrestrial helps young people from 11 to 15 years to learn English, French, and Maths. There are 12 packages in the current series. Page 4 →

europress SOFTWARE ***...the specialists in Amiga programming***



- **AMOS** – A series of five packages designed to encourage the user to program. The range consists of AMOS the Creator, easy AMOS, AMOS Compiler, AMOS 3D and the very latest – AMOS Professional – designed to appeal to users just starting out on the programming road and to experienced programmers alike. Page 6 →

...and now – Mini Office Amiga!



- **MINI OFFICE** – The complete Amiga office workstation for both home and business purposes. Containing five modules – wordprocessor, database, spreadsheet, graphics and disk utilities, all connected by a versatile menu system allowing movement between different modules with ease. Page 8 →

europress SOFTWARE

Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Tel: 0625 859333, Fax: 0625 879962

Help your child to a brighter future – with the best in educational software



Fun School 4 zooms to the top of the class. Three brand new packages combining the essentials of the National Curriculum with beautiful graphics, cleverly animated rewards and stimulating sound keep your children engrossed while they learn.

Teddy for **under fives**, Freddy the Frog for **five to seven year** olds and Sammy the Spy for **seven to eleven year olds** provide **SIX** original stimulating programs in every pack. Plus, the carefully designed levels for each program encourage your children to have fun and learn at their own pace – and ensure they get the most from Fun School 4 and keep coming back for more.

europress SOFTWARE ...making learning

Education is never out of the news these days, and it's only natural that parents have become more concerned than ever about the standard their children are attaining. At Europress Software we have responded to that concern by putting together a complete range of educational software to complement children's education at school, in line with National Curriculum guidelines.

Our Fun School range caters for children aged 3 to 11 years, covering a comprehensive range of topics from learning to recognise shapes and colours for the younger user to science questions and keyboard skills for the older child. Each subject complements what children are learning at school.

In response to demand from teachers and parents we recently launched the Fun School Specials which concentrate on three important areas – Spelling, Maths and Creativity – where parents wanted more support.

Our brand new ADI range is primarily used as a learning aid to prepare students for GCSE exams. ADI covers Maths, English and French for first to fourth year students, featuring a friendly extraterrestrial who provides some light relief from studying. Each subject has been extensively researched and adheres to the National Curriculum requirements. ADI is already being incorporated into some schools' timetables, proving the benefit of such high quality educational software.

ADI Junior is available for children aged 4 to 5 and 6 to 7 years, featuring a "young" ADI who teaches counting and reading. Each program features bright, colourful graphics, attention-grabbing sound and plenty of games to keep the child amused while they learn.

If you want to give your child a head start in their education, please contact our Customer Services who will be happy to help you. All Europress Software products are available from your high street software stockist, or by mail order.

Europress Software
Europa House
Adlington Park
Macclesfield
SK10 4NP

Tel: 0625 859333.

an exciting experience

Now the fun

fun school Specials

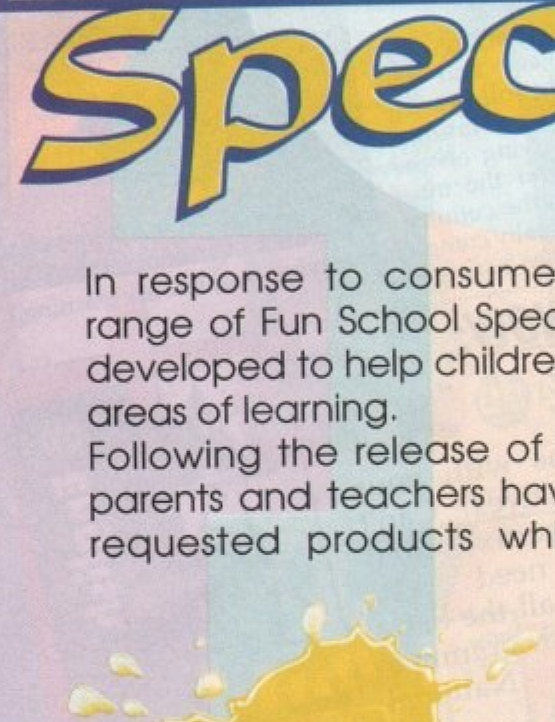
Three brand new programs from the makers of Fun School

In response to consumer demand, a range of Fun School Specials has been developed to help children with specific areas of learning.

Following the release of Fun School 4, parents and teachers have consistently requested products which focus on certain subjects in more depth – in particular spelling, maths and creativity skills.

The aim of the Fun School Specials is to complement children's school work. All the products comply fully with the National Curriculum syllabus.

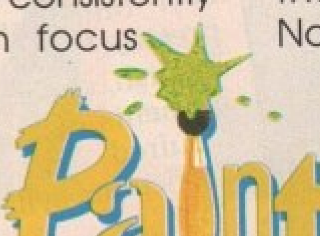
Paint and Create



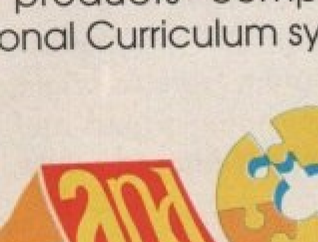
For five year olds and over

- Paint and Create is designed to help children exercise and develop their creative talents to the full.
- It consists of six entertaining activities, some with a practical bias, some which are pure fun.
- Programs within Paint and Create include Art Alive, Jigsaw, Music Maestro, Card Creator, Monster Maker and the Activity Menu which allows access to all the other programs.
- Available for Amiga, PC and C64 cassette.

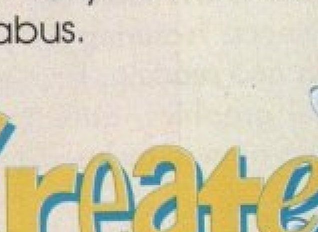
ART ALIVE



CARD CREATOR



MUSIC MAESTRO



europress SOFTWARE ...injects new life

really begins!



Spelling FAIR

For 7 to 13 year olds

- A unique package designed to help children master basic spelling techniques.
- The six programs within the package are set in a colourful fairground and incorporate the essential fun element that has made all Fun School products so popular.
- Sixty levels of difficulty to suit children of all ages and abilities.
- The package incorporates a 3,000-word dictionary containing carefully-selected words which frequently cause children difficulty.
- Parents or teachers can easily create their own mini dictionary of words that require special attention.
- Special selection of words to cater for the needs of dyslexic children.
- Available for Amiga, PC and C64 cassette.

HAUNTED HOUSE



TEST YOUR STRENGTH



CIRCUSWORDS



Merlin's Maths

For 7 to 11 year olds

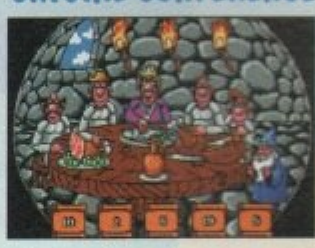
- Merlin the Wizard guides the child through exercises in counting, decimals, fractions, adding, subtracting and volumes.
- Merlin's Maths combines the essentials of eye-catching graphics and rewarding sequences to keep children amused while they learn.
- Each program within Merlin's Maths has at least three levels of difficulty.
- Available for Amiga and PC.



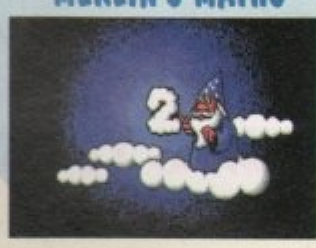
BROKEN BATTLEMENTS



CRYSTAL CONFERENCE



MERLIN'S MATHS



e into hard-to-teach subjects

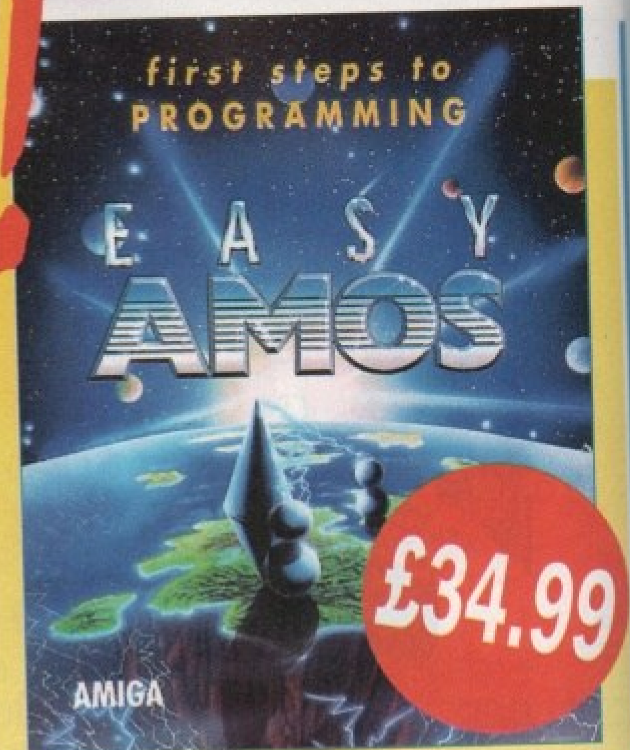
Bring your Amiga to life!

Have you ever dreamed of making your Amiga really work for you? Or wanted to harness to the full its awesome hidden power? Well now you can!

Even if you're a complete beginner, Easy AMOS will propel you into a fascinating new world where you will quickly learn how to:

- Produce impressive graphical effects
- Create and animate colourful objects
- Scroll large text across the screen
- Make your Amiga actually talk to you
- Add exciting music to your creations.

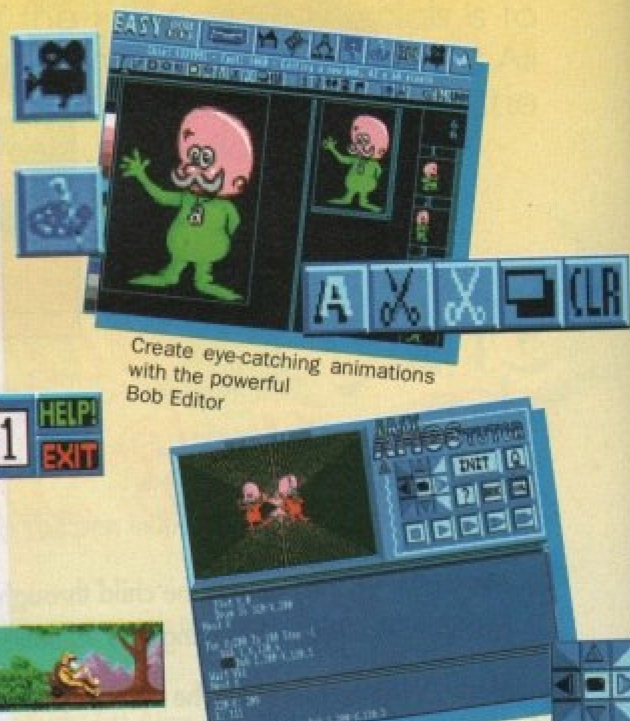
Soon you'll be turning your craziest ideas into reality: Computer art, cartoon animations, home finance, educational software, demos, arcade games, adventures – the list is endless!



£34.99

Programs galore!

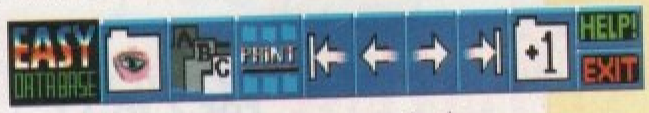
Easy AMOS is packed with ready-to-run programs which are carefully explained in simple English. You can quickly understand how they work, and then use the same ideas in your own programs. There's even a beginners' Typing Tutor. Plus a clever database to store personal details of your friends and colleagues.



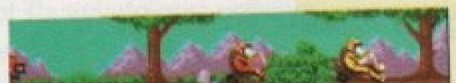
Create eye-catching animations with the powerful Bob Editor

Creating games

Easy AMOS shows you how to create entertaining programs in next to no time. Included in the package is a Breakout-style game, a racing game for one or two players with parallax scrolling, and a ball game with split screens and multi-directional scrolling. You'll find they've been entirely created using Easy AMOS – and surprised when you discover exactly how they were put together.



What's inside

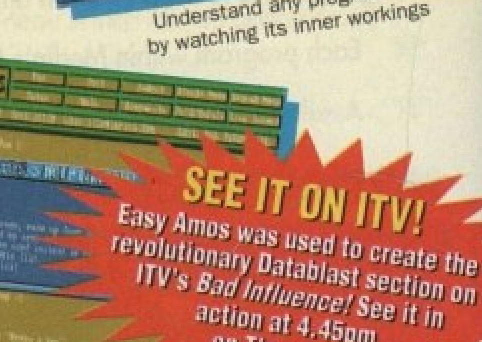


This programming course consists of two discs and a light-hearted user guide. This is cleverly linked to an electronic coach which tests your progress after you have read each chapter and tried out the example programs. Plus there's an on-screen graduation certificate when you complete the final chapter.

Easy AMOS's step-by-step and fun approach is the simplest possible route to writing your own professional-looking software.

You need 1Mb or more of RAM and three blank discs to use this product.

Easy AMOS is a simplified, ultra-friendly version of the best-selling AMOS Basic programming language.



Understand any program by watching its inner workings

SEE IT ON ITV!
Easy Amos was used to create the revolutionary Datablast section on ITV's *Bad Influence!* See it in action at 4.45pm on Thursdays

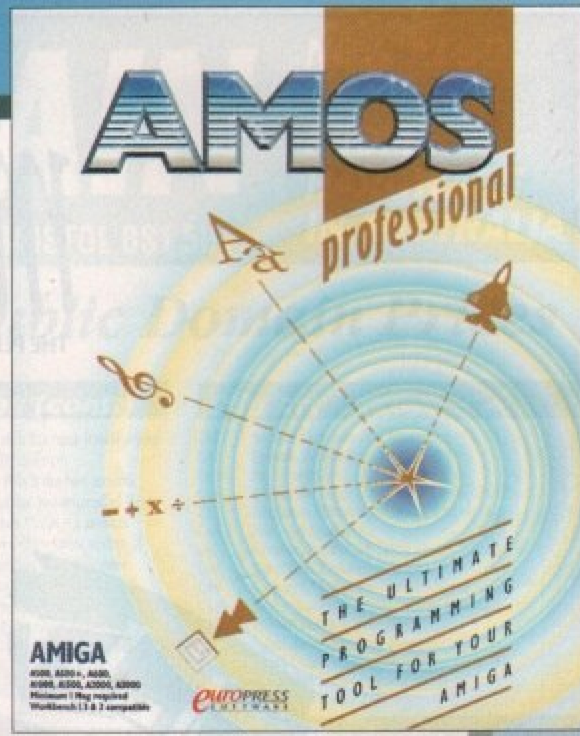


Easy AMOS's on-line help is just one keypress away

Make your dreams come to life ...with Easy Amos!

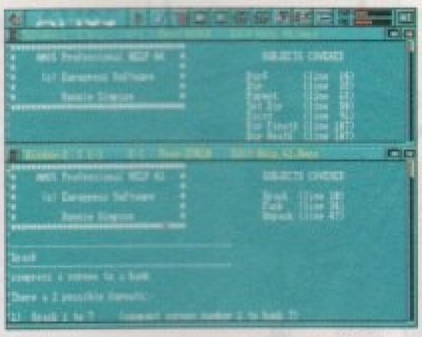
europress SOFTWARE ...turning the Amig

Now AMOS has turned Professional!

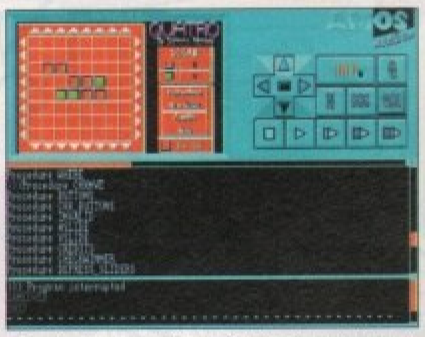


AMOS The Creator has brought programming within the reach of over 50,000 Amiga users. Now it has been given a complete overhaul and the result is a vastly enhanced product – AMOS Professional – designed for all experienced Amiga programmers.

AMOS Professional has 200 new commands, taking the total to over 700. Included in the package is a 650-page manual written by Mel Croucher who wrote the highly-praised Easy AMOS manual, and Stephen Hill who wrote the original AMOS manual. Programs written using earlier versions of AMOS and Easy AMOS can be loaded into AMOS Professional for amendment or enhancement.



Write programs with ease using the feature packed Editor



Track down problems fast in the advanced Monitor Mode

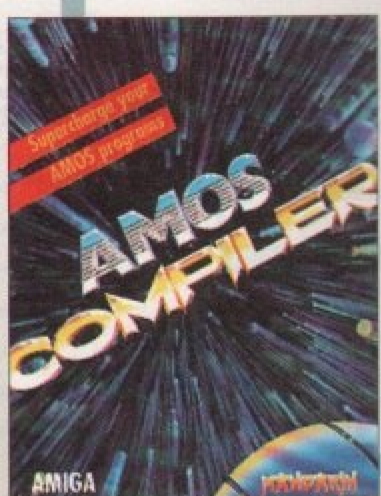


You can get serious too – File O' Facts shows just what's possible

- On-line help provides details of the command at the cursor position – another click takes you to a fully documented working example.
- A new editor with drop-down menus, keyboard macros, advanced undo/redo, and multiple windows on screen.
- IFF animation playback that runs faster than in DPaint.
- MED music library support with MIDI data send, Noise Tracker support, easier access to the printer, serial and parallel ports and much more.
- MOUTH commands to link sprites to speech output from the SAY command to create a realistic talking head.
- Two discs crammed with working examples, and tutorials demonstrating AMAL, the new AMOS Interface system, collision detection and other key topics.
- A selection of new highly-finished programs, including Planet Zybex, a scrolling shoot-'em- up, the File O'Facts electronic data organiser, Quatro puzzle game and Dithell's Wonderland, an eight-way scrolling platform game.

The result is a package which will more than satisfy home and professional AMOS users. It's fun to use, offers lots to learn – it's essential for the Amiga.

Supercharge your creations



Now you can make your AMOS programs run like lightning with **AMOS Compiler.** Typically most programs will **double in speed** – some commands are more than **5 times fatser.** These spectacular results will have everyone thinking you've programmed in machine code!

In addition, AMOS Compiler comes with an incredible compactor which will squash the size of your programs by up to 80% **(60% compression on average)** in a matter of seconds! This means that your programs take less disc space – and they load faster too.

With the incredible speed increases and program compaction the AMOS Compiler will give your programs that professional edge.

With every AMOS Compiler is a special program which will update your copy of AMOS to the very latest version – and that means improved extension handling, smoother multi-tasking, plus new sprite flipping routines and BOB and SCREEN COPY routines.

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The current AMOS Compiler will work with AMOS Professional, but a full new Compiler will be released next year which will take advantage of all AMOS Professional's new features.

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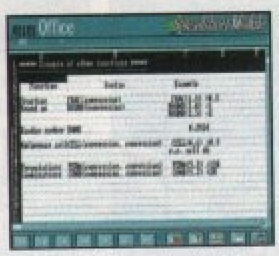
- A professional **WORDPROCESSOR** with powerful graphics capabilities and a 50,000 word spell checker. Ideal for a wide variety of correspondence and official documents.
- A versatile **DATABASE** which is simple to use and powerful enough to deal with anything from basic address book functions to club membership lists and business records.
- A flexible **SPREADSHEET** with more than 50 functions, simplifying the most complex domestic monthly budgets or commercial cash flow forecasts.
- A supremely friendly **DISC MANAGER** to make using your Amiga as painless a task as possible.
- Incredible **GRAPHICS** with more than 18 types of graphs and charts available to brighten up your presentations or make your month by month financial situation as easy to appreciate as possible. You can even make use of eye-catching 3D effects!



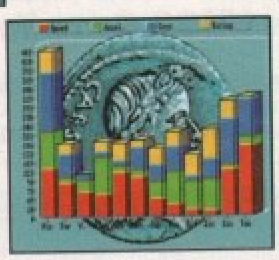
Wordprocessor: Compose a letter, check your spelling with the 50,000 word dictionary, mailmerge details from a database file, add graphics, wrap text around it, load ASCII text, highlight with bold, italic and underline... and more!



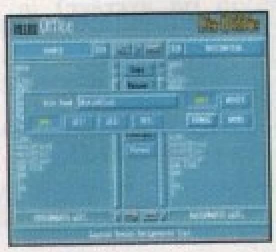
Database: Build up a versatile card index, incorporate up to 50 fields with 70 characters each, use search and replace to modify data, do powerful multi-field sorting, perform arithmetic functions... and more!



Spreadsheet: Prepare budgets or tables, alter column widths, insert or delete columns, cut and paste data, lock blocks, choose from over 50 functions... and more!



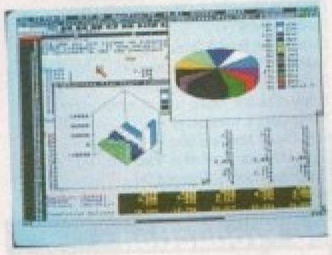
Graphics: Enter data directly or load from the spreadsheet or database; produce pie charts with exploded segments; display bar charts side by side or stacked; overlay your graphs on an imported IFF picture; add a 3D view; add text or lines... and more!



Disc Utilities: Avoid the confusion of Workbench, create bootable files, format discs, copy files from disc to disc; make directories; delete and rename files, make multiple copies of your discs... and more!

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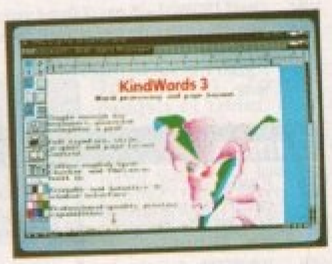
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Both upgrades require : Amiga 500, 500+, 600, 600 HD, 1000, 2000, or 3000, Workbench 1.3 or 2.0, 1 MB RAM (additional memory recommended). Two disk drives or hard disk recommended.

* Suggested retail price.

Workbench blues

Help please, I am relatively new to Amiga computers, but have an A500 upgraded to a Plus with Workbench 2.0.

I got the Virus Checker off October's *Amiga Computing* but can't seem to drag it into my startup-sequence. I get a system message: "Workbench is full". Perhaps I am doing something wrong – any ideas?.

T M Dodd, Northallerton

The simple answer is that your Workbench disk is full, so there's no room for Virus Checker on the disk. What you'll have to do is remove some less useful programs like Graphic Dump and CMD.

If this doesn't work, remove the printer drivers you don't use from the printers drawer and that should give you enough space. Then all you have to do is copy Virus Checker into the C: directory and add the line "Virus Checker" to your startup-sequence.

NB: Make sure you are using a copy disk of Workbench when you do this!

Sounding off

Having recently purchased an A600 I was disappointed to find that my A600 would not produce sound on my Commodore 1084 (not 1084S) monitor. The monitor was fine on my C64 and the A600 worked well on a borrowed protable TV.

The 1084 has no 23 pin D-port, so I purchased at great expense from CPC a

6 -pin linear to 23-pin D ring. This has given me a picture but no sound.

As a soldier in Germany I have found German Commodore retailers less than helpful, but would like to thank Gordon Harwood Computers for putting me in contact with CPC. Is this an upgrade problem, or can you let me know where I can get a cable to do the job?

S Prowse, Germany

We are afraid you've been sold the wrong cable. On the back of your monitor is a socket called a Scart connector which takes care of both picture and sound.

What you need is a basic Amiga to Scart cable – your best bet is to pick one up from Phoenix Mail Order (0532 311932) for about £10 plus p&p.

Printer out of puff? Computer cracking up? We're here to help!

AMIGA COMPUTING

ADVICE SERVICE

Write to ACAS, Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Save your saes – we can't reply personally

Startup problems

I need help with the Zoom program from a Workstation menu which I use to speed up the mouse. I would like this to be activated automatically on booting up.

When I move the Zoom program to a convenient directory and call it up from the startup program it crashes the boot sequence.

I think it actually runs Zoom and then refuses to proceed out of the end of it. Is it possible to modify anything to achieve this, bearing in mind that the Zoom program seems to be in a fundamental non-English type code and I am only a computer user, not a computer buff?

A second problem relates to an HP LaserJet III printer which I currently drive only from my Protext wordprocessor with its own appropriate driver.

I would like to have a suitable printer driver in the Amiga's drivers drawer so that I could drive the printer for other applications by setting the driver from there (the LaserJet driver supplied is too rudimentary). Do you know if a suitable driver is available to enable me to do this?

D Price, Pontypool

You are right about your first problem. When you call certain programs from your startup-sequence the program runs and then does not return to the startup-sequence.

What you have to do is tell your startup-sequence to run the program and then return to the next line after the program you have called. To do this put Zoom in your "C:" directory and add the line:

```
run >Nil: <Nil: ZOOM
```

➤

Memory switching for the brave at heart

I have an Amiga 500 fitted with a fatter Agnus and a 512k RAM expansion and a friend of mine had the same setup. Then he wanted 1Mb of chip RAM and sent off his Amiga to have it fitted

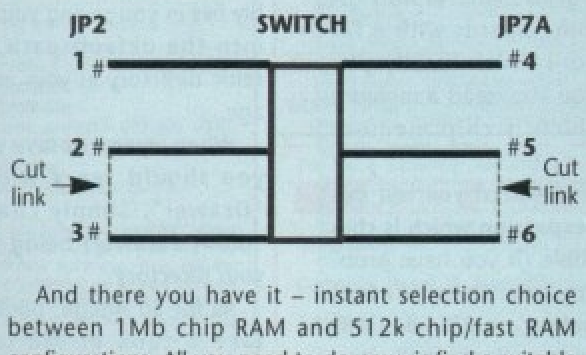
But he was then stuck with the 1Mb configuration. This seemed a bit off to me, so I decided to do the conversion myself to enable me to switch between 1Mb chip RAM and 512k chip/fast RAM.

Those readers who feel confident enough to do as I did should follow these three simple instructions after opening the Amiga's casing. A steady hand is essential:

- Locate JP2 next to the ROM chip and JP7A next to the internal expansion port.

- At JP2 cut the link between tracks 2 and 3 and solder a wire to each track. Take them to a 6 – pin toggle switch, making sure the wire from track 2 goes to the centre pin.

- At JP7A, cut the link between tracks 5 and 6 and solder a wire to each of these tracks. Take these to the switch, making sure that the wire from track 5 goes to the centre pin on the opposite side of the switch to the track 2 wire. Also, the track 6 wire must be opposite the track 3 wire (see diagram).



And there you have it – instant selection choice between 1Mb chip RAM and 512k chip/fast RAM configurations. All you need to do now is find a suitable place for your switch. This conversion will only work for Amigas fitted with the fatter Agnus chip and a suitable 512k memory upgrade.

J Luntley, Rugby

Thanks for sending this tip in. Do make sure that you always turn off your Amiga before flicking the switch and that the RAM expansion you use is chip-memory compatible.

If you have any usefull tips you consider worthy of printing then send them in and if we think there of use we'll consider printing them. Send your tips to David Dibnah, ACAS, Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

***Amiga Computing* and J Luntley point out that we cannot be responsible for damage to Amigas caused by people carrying out this conversion – which will invalidate any warranty you may have.**

➤ This should run Zoom and then return to the startup-sequence to continue the boot sequence.

Several PD houses have a new driver for the HP Laserjet III printer, but if you have difficulty give HP a ring on 0344-369222 and they should be able to help you.

AMIGA COMPUTING ADVICE SERVICE

Missing software

With my Amiga Class of the '90s pack I got a Datel Electronics Midi Master Interface with one Midi In port, three Midi Out and one Midi Thru without instructions and software.

Do you know how to use it? If I am allowed to sell it I will do so for £12, so can you please print my address? Finally will the Amiga Action Replay cart MK III work with 5Mb via a thru port?.

D Eyre, North Humberside

We presume that you bought your Amiga new, and if that is the case you should have received some music software and instructions with it.

The Midi interface is a way of connecting an Amiga to a musical instrument like a keyboard. It translates computer signals into signals that the musical instrument understands, so you end up with the computer playing the instrument.

As for selling your kit, you'll find a classified ads section at the back of this magazine in which you can advertise unwanted items. The first ten words are free. Fill in the coupon and send it in.

As far as we know the Action Replay MK III cartridge requires extra memory, so check with Datel first before buying one.

PAL to NTSC

In about two months' time I'm relocating to Texas and am thinking about taking my Amiga 500 with me. Now the mains voltage in the Netherlands is about 220 while the United States is on 115 volts.

Will my European-bought Amiga still work in the United States, and do you have any useful addresses in the United States where I can buy a new power transformer to fit the 115 voltage over there?

Finally, I must say I really enjoy reading your magazine every month, as I find it one of the best around for the Amiga. Thank you very much for your time.

S Abraas, Maastricht, Netherlands

The main problem you are going to have is with the different screen formats in the States. If you have an Amiga with a fatter Agnus you'll be all right because it is capable of displaying PAL or NTSC. Once you are over there you should have no problems picking up a suitable power supply from most Commodore dealers.

You may have to invest in a new modulator if you wish to plug your Amiga into a TV, but you would probably be better off buying an American monitor.

A piece of pie

A while ago I bought a PenPal V1.4 wordprocessor. It is perfect for my needs, giving high quality documents and graphics. However, one other thing I was hoping to be able to do on my new "toy" was to create graphs and mathematical charts (line graphs, bar charts, pie charts.), but to my huge disappointment this was not possible.

I have scanned every *Amiga Computing* magazine from cover to cover, but am unable to find any software to suit my needs. I need somthing relatively cheap – PD, shareware or cheapish commercial – that can create the diagrams I stated above simply by typing in the relevant statistics.

I am more than happy with PenPal's documental and graphical capabilities. I also have a Citizen Swift 24E colour printer and my computer is an A500 with 1Mb of memory (I am hoping to upgrade to 2Mb in the distant future, money permitting!). I hope you'll be able to suggest something before my head explodes from reading so many PD lists!

T Sharrard, Sussex

This is a difficult one. Now if you had a PC the answer would have been simple, As-Easy-As, which is a PD clone of Lotus 123, the best spreadsheet available.

However, here are two suggestions. First try a Shareware program from 17 bit called Alpha Graph (contact them on 0924 366982). Failing that you might like to take a look at Mini Office-spreadsheet, database, wordprocessor and disk manager available through Europress Software on 0625- 859333

Business accounts

I have owned a 500 Plus Amiga since June and have found it a wonderful machine except for one thing – I have tried now for 12 weeks to put my simple business accounts on to a floppy disk and still had no luck. It is driving me crazy.

I have read and re-read the manual and followed the instructions step-by-step, still without success.

Can you please supply me information as to how I can accomplish this simple operation and advise me what book to buy?

M Burston, Hants

You haven't said which accounts package you are using, but they all work in a similar way.

The answer to your problem probably lies in you saving your information into the default path, that is the same directory as your accounts package.

When you go to save your accounts you should see a window called "Drawer". Simply change this to "df0:", (drawer) being the name of your directory.

As for an Amiga book, you should take a look at *Mastering Amiga Workbench*, by Bruce Smith Books. Contact them on 0923 894355.

Cybernetix

I recently got Cybernetix off your CoverDisk and unfortunately it fails to run on my A500 Plus. I've heard this is due to the game using fast memory. I have an A500 Plus with no fast memory.

Is there any way of making my Amiga more compatible with older software which was not designed for the Plus machine other than having to buy fast memory and a ROM switcher?

Robert Sole, Birkenhead

We've had a few enquires about Cybernetix not working on the Plus machines. The problem is that this program was written in New Zealand and they don't have the Plus machines there yet.

As you've already said, one answer is to buy some fast memory but this only works with programs which specifically use fast memory.

One other solution is to get hold of a PD program called Degrader. Apparently this program is able to degrade the A500 Plus and the A1.3 600 into an old Amiga, which in thoery will make your machine more compatable with existing software. Degrader is available from most good PD libraries.

More chip memory

I have a 1.3 Amiga 500 motherboard version 6A holding a Fat Agnus 8372A, a 512k memory upgrade (trapdoor), external disk drive and also an external ROM sharer on the expansion port fitted with Kickstart 2.04.

Why is it that when using Kickstart 2.04 I am not able to access 1Mb of chip RAM? With the memory upgrade switched on I have 441,232 graphics memory and 360,176 other memory. With the upgrade switched off I have 277,152 graphics memory and zero other memory.

Is something wrong in the system, or must I undertake major surgery on my computer? I know this is not a drastic problem, but it's annoying knowing I have 1Mb RAM which I cannot fully access.

R Hardy, Bad Lippspringe, Germany

You can only perform the chip memory upgrade on version 6A upwards motherboards with a fat Agnus fitted – which luckily you have – but you also need a memory upgrade which is chip memory compatible.

Once you've sorted yourself out with a RAM expansion which is chip RAM compatible (if you have problems finding one then contact Power Computing on 0234 843388) you will need to make a small alteration to your motherboard.

Fairwinds PD

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Rumsam ■ Barnstaple
N. Devon ■ EX32 9EP
Tel 0271 44393

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G102 Super Skoda Challenge +
G109 Sky Flyer +
G110 Survivor
G121 Moria (good)
G123 Peter's Quest +
G124 Return to Earth (Elite style game) +
G125 Wizzy's Quest (good) +
G126 Faschbier
G127 Lamer Game +
G128 Battle Force
G131 Master of the Town
G137 Dragon's Cave +
G138 Serene II +
G139 Castle of Doom +
G140 Holy Grail (good text adventure) +
G141 Pom, Pom Gunner +
G142 Puggles
G145 Serene III +
G146 China Challenge II
G147 Wacko Junior in Wonderland +
G148 Electric Train Set +
G149/50 Dungeon Delver (good) 2 disks
G155/177 Assassins Disk 1-22
G178 International Cricket (good) +
G179 Revenge of the Mutant Camels (good)+
G180 Llamatron (J Minter)
G181 Lemmingoids (excellent)
G182 Skier (good)
G183 Sealance
G184 Wooden Ball (good)
G185/6 Pixie Kingdom (excellent)
G187 Crossfire

Demos, Animations

A330/1X Wing Animation (good) 2 disks
A332 Iraq Demo
A333 Puggs in Space
A334 Fish Tank
A335/6Scream Megademo
A337/8Death Star Megademo
A339 Space Sphere (good)
A340/1RSI Megademo 2 disks
A342/3RAF Megademo 2 disks
A344/5NASA Slideshow 2 disks
A346 Magician Demo
A347 Juggette 2 (good)
A348 Probe Animation
A349 Agatron 25 Red Lotus
A350 Walker Demo +
A351/5Odyssey (5 disks) (not to be missed)
A356 Sweet Revenge +
A357 Stealth Animations
A358 Stealth Manoeuvres +
A359 Virtual Worlds
A360 Decaying Paradise +
A361 Alpha Omega +
A362 Budbrain II
A363 Voyage +
A364/5Predators Megademo (2 disks)
A366 Scoopex Megademo +
A367 Total Destruction (Crionics)

Utilities

U030 Disk Master V.32
U031 Sid V.2.00 +
U035 200 Utilities
U036 Zenon Utilities (75)
U037 Disk Copy V.2.0 +
U038 Text Engine V.3.0 (with Spellcheck) +
U039 Super Killers (good virus killer)
U040 RSI Demo Maker
U041 RSI Vector Ball Editor
U042 RSI Vector Object Editor
U043 RSI Fonts Editor
U044 RSI Modules 1
U045 RSI Modules 2
U046 RSI Modules 3
U047 RSI Utilities 1
U048 RSI Utilities 2
U049 Forms Really Unlimited +
U050 Fix Disk +
U051 Opti Utilities 1 (good) +
U052 Opti Utilities 2 +
U053/54 North C (Programming)
U055 Menu Maker
U056 Nuke (Saddam Killer) +
U057 Text Plus +
U058 M Cad +
U059 Med V3.2 +
U060 Icon Mania +
U061 Professional Disk Copy V3.0
U062 Icon Maker +
U063 Amiga Fox D.T.P.+
U064 Falcon Bootblock Creator +
U065 Total Utilities (20)
U067 C Light (Ray Tracing) +
U068 Golf Recorder
U069 Astro 22 (Astrology) +
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U071 Quick Draw +
U072 Astronomy
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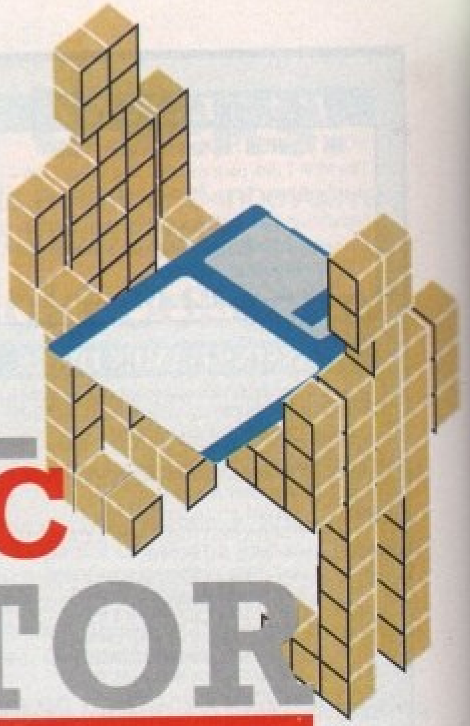
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PUBLIC SECTOR



A huge variety of software is available that will cost you little or nothing. Phil Morse looks at this month's offerings from the Amiga public domain

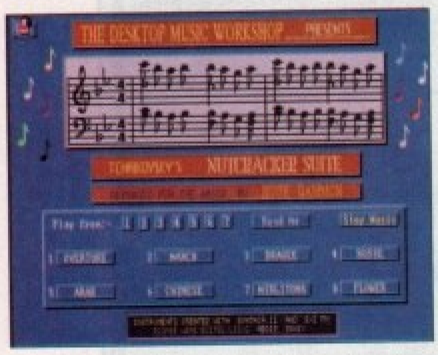
We've a wider selection of quality, affordable software this month than possibly ever before. Who could argue with the range? From the Nutcracker Suite completely Amiga-ised to an involved Antarctic-based strategy/arcade game, the public domain can boast more than ever that it provides something for everyone.

Some of these programs are shareware, which means that should you find them useful, you should send a small, specified fee to the author.

Do it – only by people being honest will shareware live on for the good of us all. Anyway, you usually get a manual, a better version of the program and news on updates as and when they happen, so it's worth it from an economic as well as a moral standpoint.

Nutcracker Suite

17 Bit, 2238A/B, by Hugh Gammon



As far as Romantic classical music goes, Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite must be one of the most famous pieces of all time.

All seven movements of the suite are included, and can be selected individually from an opening menu – a little like selecting tracks from a CD.

The instruments were created using Synthia II and E-2FM, but it is with the instruments that this program's shortcoming is exposed.

Classical music is obviously a much bigger job to program than a pop or dance number – it is much more complex, the arrangement will almost invariably be more involved, and it relies a lot more on subtle nuances and expertly composed changes in feel which mark out the true genius composers from the crowd.

While Hugh has managed to quite successfully port the essence of the music to the Amiga, it does sound more like a Lemmings soundtrack than an emotion-moving masterpiece.

However, as an exercise in computer music, this is good stuff indeed. It's well presented, with some nice touches (the mouse pointer turns into a conductor who actual conducts while the music is playing) and will appeal to anyone who is interested in the actual mechanics of Amiga music programming.

Lyponov Space Generator v1.0

17 Bit, 2237, by David Head

Fractal generators really are old news nowadays. I had one on my ZX81, so that shows how long computer programmers have had an interest in the little random beasts.

While the graphics and speed of generation have both improved with computer hardware over the years, the basic formulae and patterns have remained pretty much the same.

However, the Lypanov (who?) fractal generator claims, with some justification, to be different. To quote the programmer, it creates plots which "have a more organic feel than normal fractals".

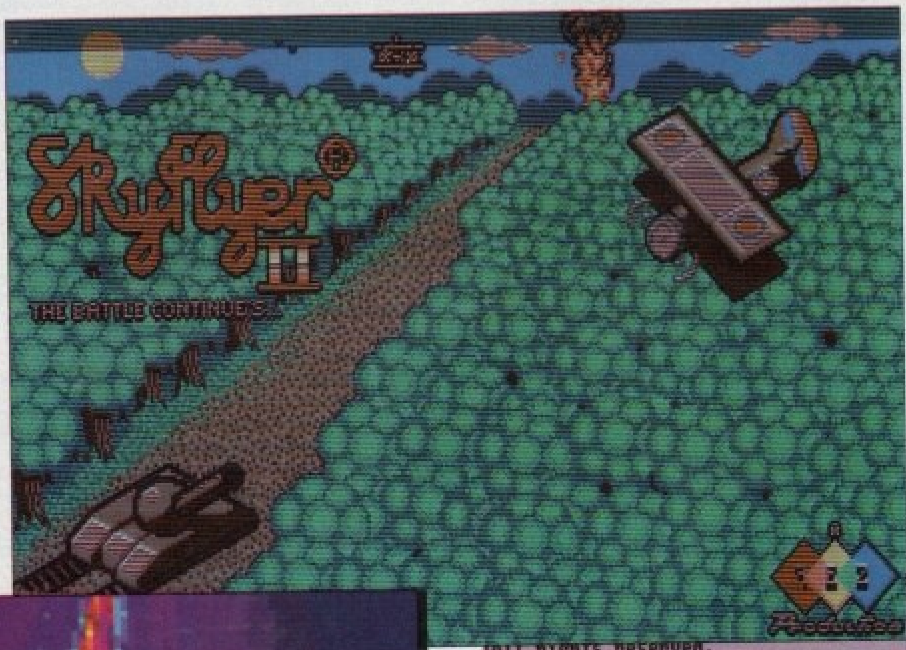
Quite what this means is only apparent when you see one of the Lypanov-generated fractals – they are undeniably different, and taking into account the over[...] we've witnessed with the other variety [...] much more attractive.

Once you've generated a fractal, yo[u] can zoom in and out on it and improve [...] looks in a number of ways. Selecting th[e] Contour feature will embellish your patte[rn] with a myriad of colours, while Colour [...] while not allowing you to define your ow[n] colour palettes – will allow you to choose one of three different pre-programmed ones.

When you are happy with your display you can save your fractal out as an IFF or [a] Lypanov custom file, for loading into th[is] program or any paint package which accepts IFFs (ie any worth having).

The programmer has also included a slideshow which contains a selection of very different but equally impressive fractals generated using the system.

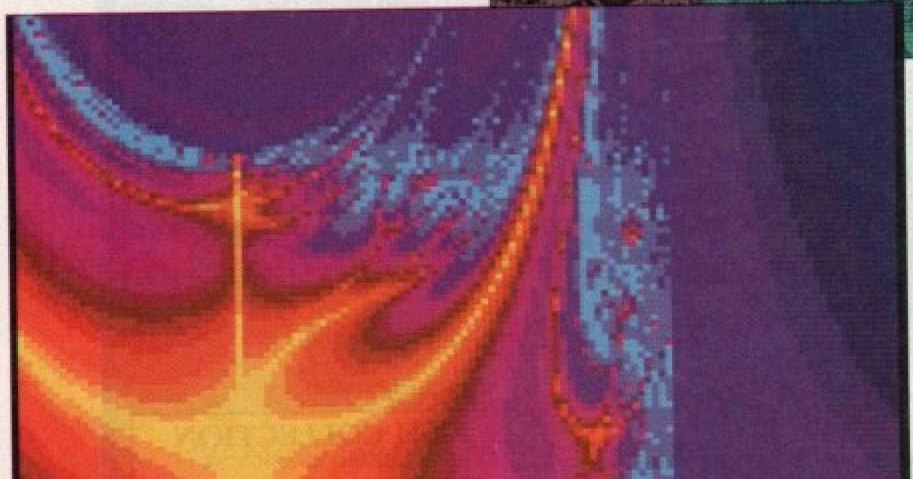
If you've a penchant for this kind of thing and are getting bored with the old favourites, Lypanov could be right up you[r] street.



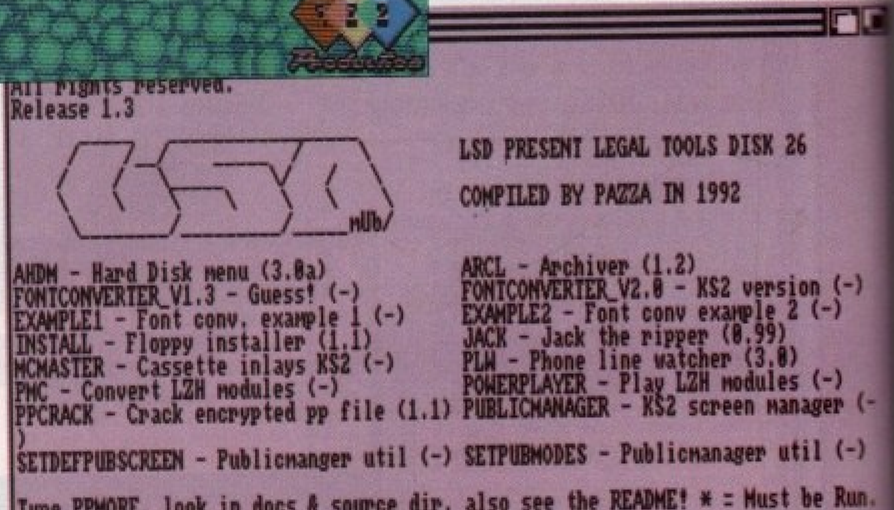
LSD Utilities Disks

17 Bit, 2254/55

These "legal tools" are notable because o[f] the sheer quantity, and so value for mone[y]



Lypanov – a more organic fractal?



Some of the tools on the LSD utilities disks



The navigation computer computer from Intrepid

of utilities provided. There really is no room to list them here, but suffice to say that everything from screen blankers to a copper editor to a fix for the popular music program Protracker are here.

LSD are to be congratulated for these disks – not only are they highly useful and good value, but show a real commitment by a group of people to the Amiga scene. What better way to help Amiga users than to release a pile of utilities that you fond useful yourselves?

This is altogether a much more commendable attitude than the "I'm never telling you how I did that!" slant many programmers take over their personal "tricks of the trade". Up the people, that's what I say!

Skyflyer 2

17 Bit, 2221

Written with SEUCK (the Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit), this game looks... well, similar to every other SEUCK game. This is not to put it down, just to say that there is a little element of "you've seen one, you've seen them all" about SEUCK efforts.

Anyway, Skyflyer is a little like Thunderblade, but with (surprise, surprise) a permanent aerial view of the proceedings – oh, and you control a biplane, not a helicopter.

The idea is (surprise, surprise) to shoot everything that moves/shoots things at you/gets in your way. The planes fly in diagonally from both sides, while tanks will attempt to shoot you from the roads below.

There are also power-up style bonuses which float around in a bubble-like fashion waiting for you to pick them up and add to your score.

The graphics and movement are, well, SEUCK-like, with the scrolling a tad dodgy and the icons of a suspiciously familiar size, but the game itself is actually quite difficult and addictive – even if it is ultimately a little out of date.

Intrepid

PD Soft, 2674, by Peter Gage

This is a slickly presented arcade/strategy game, in which you must guide your tank through the Antarctic to rescue a scientist who has been taken hostage by dastardly terrorists.

On booting, the computer executes its "pre-drop procedures" (!) And you're off into the snowball-ridden wastes at the bottom of the world. What a lucky soul!

The game is basically strategy with arcadey bits thrown in. There's a navigation computer which displays the position of your tank with regard to the enemy, the ammunition dumps (what your scientist was doing with those we'll probably never find out), fuel depots and so on.

You will find yourself selecting the navigation computer quite regularly, because this is the part of your tank which you use to move yourself around, by a system of arrows and a grid which straddles your map.

When you're ambushed by the enemy, you are presented with a bleak, snowy backdrop on which the enemy appear from behind rocks and the like to take shots at you. And it's not snowballs they're dropping, either. So you must zap them before they fry you.

Control is via the mouse, and you simply move the target to the enemy on the screen and press the button. Easy!

Only they appear with alarming regularity, and you need some pretty deft mouse-to-mouse mat co-ordination to get the lot of them without them hitting you ➤

Calling PD libraries

Crackle... Crackle... A message struggles across the ether... I need your PD... All of it... Send it to me, Phil Morse, at Amiga Computing, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP... Avon! The signal's cracking up, and Blake's still on the planet's surface! (Phil, you're fired – Ed)

Dreams and Visions



In this brand new animations and demos column, we'll be featuring the best cartoons, still artwork, fantasy fractals – indeed anything demonstrating new, interesting or just plain impressive uses of the machine's graphical capabilities.

The Pure Fantasies Slideshow (*17 Bit, 2243A/B*) features some competent space-based and futuristic pictures.

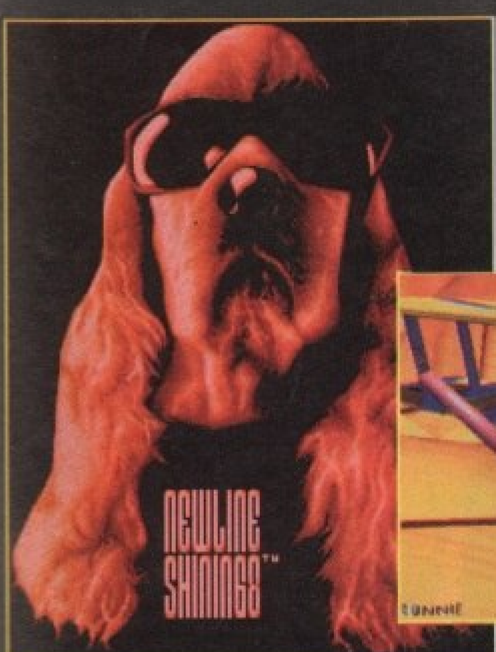
I presume they've been scanned and then retouched, but the end certainly justifies the means. The accompanying music is spacious if a little disjointed.

My only complaint is the artist's propensity to digitise scantily clad women – a cheapening quality, but one which fails to distract from the disk's overall air of an exciting technological future.

The next disk is the Shining 8 Slide Demo (*17 Bit, 2220*). Wonderful atmospheric music and a dog wearing shades (obviously had a long night) introduce this slideshow of seven picture, which range from magic spheres to biplanes.

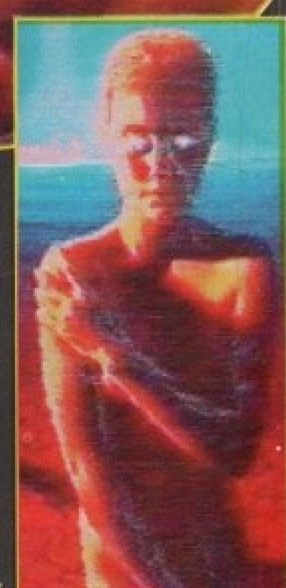
One picture, called Press, has what I think is an Amiga disk or magazine in a press and rather squashed by all accounts. It's bizarre and comically coherent and is my favourite on a disk where all of the pictures are of a high standard.

Nothing else really jumped out this month, but hopefully a dedicated column will encourage you libraries to send in more slideshows, visual demos and graphics to me at the usual address.





Shining 8



Pure fantasies

too many times.

It's all rather complex, which – certainly when first played – makes you glad to have "on-line" access to the manual at all times, simply by clicking on the relevant icon.

Oh and if it all gets to much, they're a safety-catched self-destruct button. Always good for a laugh, big red buttons. But I digress.

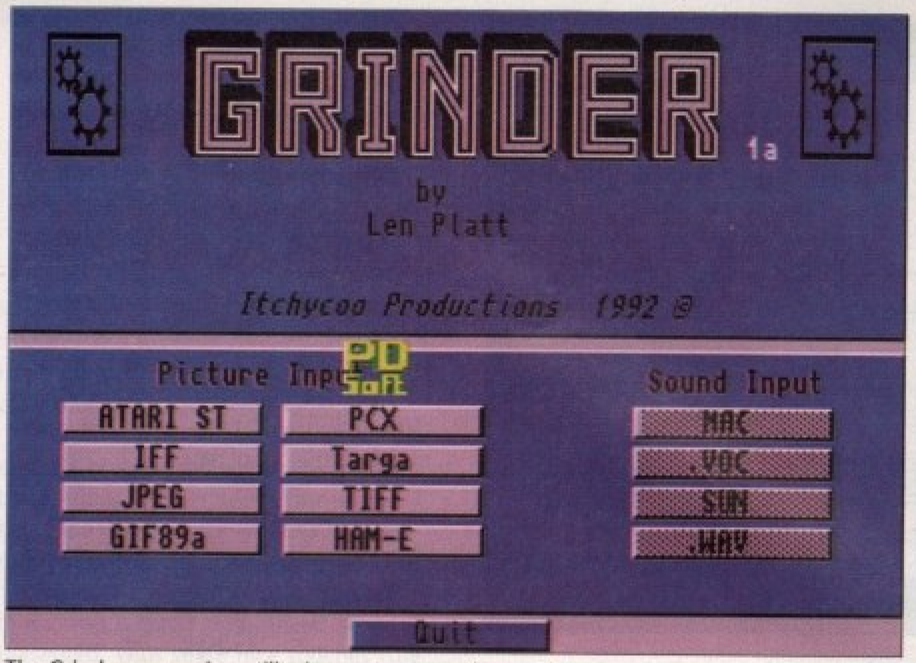
This is a nicely presented game, with enough variety in it to prevent it from becoming tedious.

Grinder Graphics

PD Soft, V794

Or the Grinder Graphics Conversion Utility, to give it its full title. Frustrated with having to use long-winded CLI commands whenever you want to convert a graphic into a different format?

Fret no more, Amiga users! Grinder replaces the familiar CLI headache with an altogether far more agreeable user-friendly point-and-click style interface. Not only that, but as Grinder is a batch processor, it can convert loads of graphics at once, without any input from you. A dream come true for coffee-lovers everywhere.



The Grinder conversion utility is easy to use and attractive

Of course, to fully utilise such a program, a hard drive is pretty much essential. Due to the large size of your typical graphics file, a floppy disk could hold very few images.

Also, the batch processing capabilities of this program would be severely disabled by your needing to change disks in the drive at regular intervals, when you could be curled up in front of Eldorado with a coffee. On the other hand, though...

It handles most well-known and a couple of not so well-known formats – IFF, ST, JPEG, GIF89a, PCX, TGA, TIFF and even HAM-E are all catered for, in a highly usable, well presented and so ultimately very useful program.

Sound module capabilities will be added to the next version of this program which will elevate it into the realms of the indispensable, but only if the author gets enough interest (ie shareware fees) from people for this version. So register!

Contact addresses

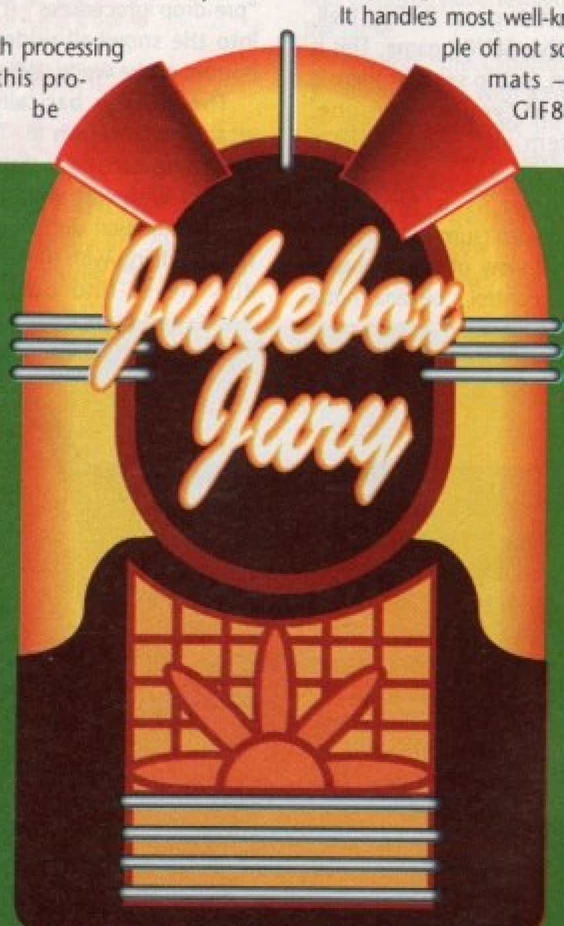
Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Southampton SO1 6QX

Nebula Software, 42 Goldspink Lane, Sandyford, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1NR

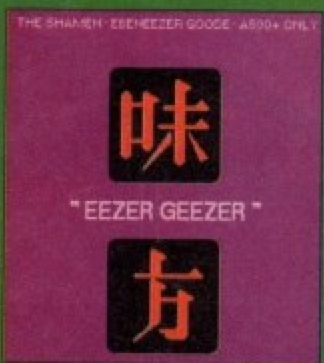
PD Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS1 2YD

17 Bit, First Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH

Virus Free PD, 31 Fardingdon Road, Swindon SN1 5AR



Welcome to Jukebox Jury, the brand new column dedicated to sifting musical masterpieces from turgid tunes. All decisions are irrevocably final, and the judge and jury will consist of... erm, just me. So on with the game...



First up this month is Ebeneezer Goode (*17 Bit, 2239*), which is a purely musical remix (the screen stays static all the way through) of the number one hit by Scottish visionaries The Shamen.

This is outstanding for its clarity – the music is extremely well digitised, sounding clear and dynamic. Coupled with an interesting and value-for-money lengthed remix, the Jury say: "Hit!".

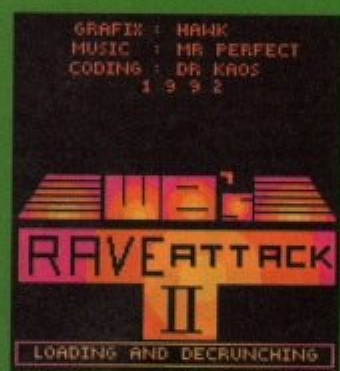
Next in the drive is Rave Attack II (*17 Bit, 2241*). Oh, the good-for-nothing scoundrels! This disk either had the wrong name on it or it comes under extremely dodgy pretences.

The opening graphics lull you into a false sense of well-being by their air of quality, but just when you're committed and the music starts, you realise that you're listening to yet another version of that rubbishy rave racket, Sesame's Treet by the Smart Es. I'm sorry, but the Great British Novelty Record has always had a shelf value of no more than two weeks or three listens, whichever comes first, and frankly this has outstayed its welcome. The Jury say: "Miss!".



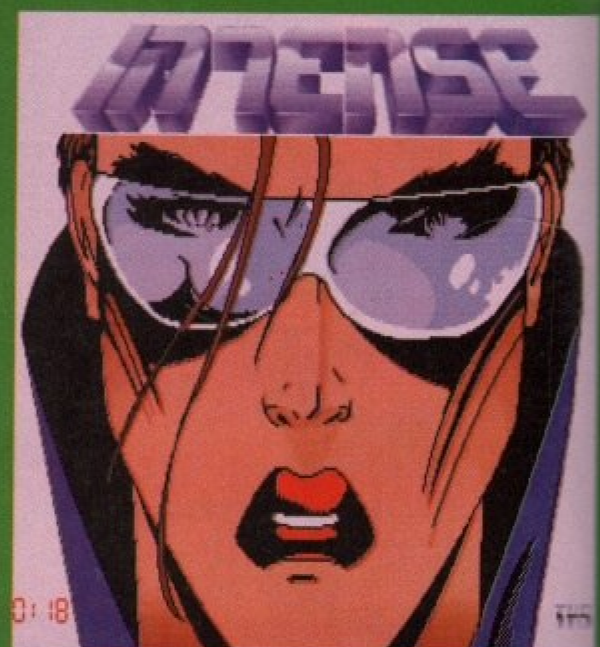
Hmmm, maybe we can expect better things from Intense Ultimate Dance (*17 Bit, 2253*). Indeed, this sounds much better. This isn't more mad rave, but dance music with a more considered and soulful edge. Our first house disk? Yes indeedy.

Topped off with a nice picture of one of the more disturbing characters from TV's Liquid TV, this is a welcome change from nose-bleed nonsense. The jury say: "'Nuff respect!".



Well, two hits and a miss this month, but as Meat Loaf once sang, "two out of three ain't bad". And we can only feature what you libraries out there send, so if you think dance is an evil technological King Kong ripping the heart out of Frank Sinatra's *New York, New York*, then send me your alternatives!

Some of next month's disks are already lining up in our sad little studio here at *AC* Towers, and very interesting they're sounding too. So tune in next time. Good night!



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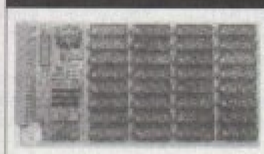


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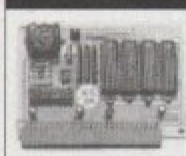
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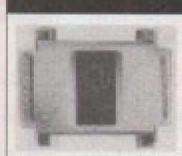
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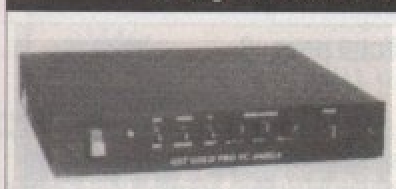


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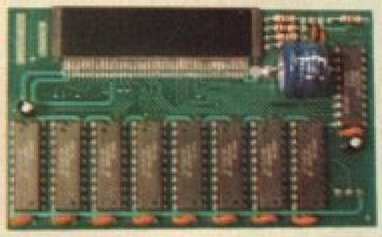
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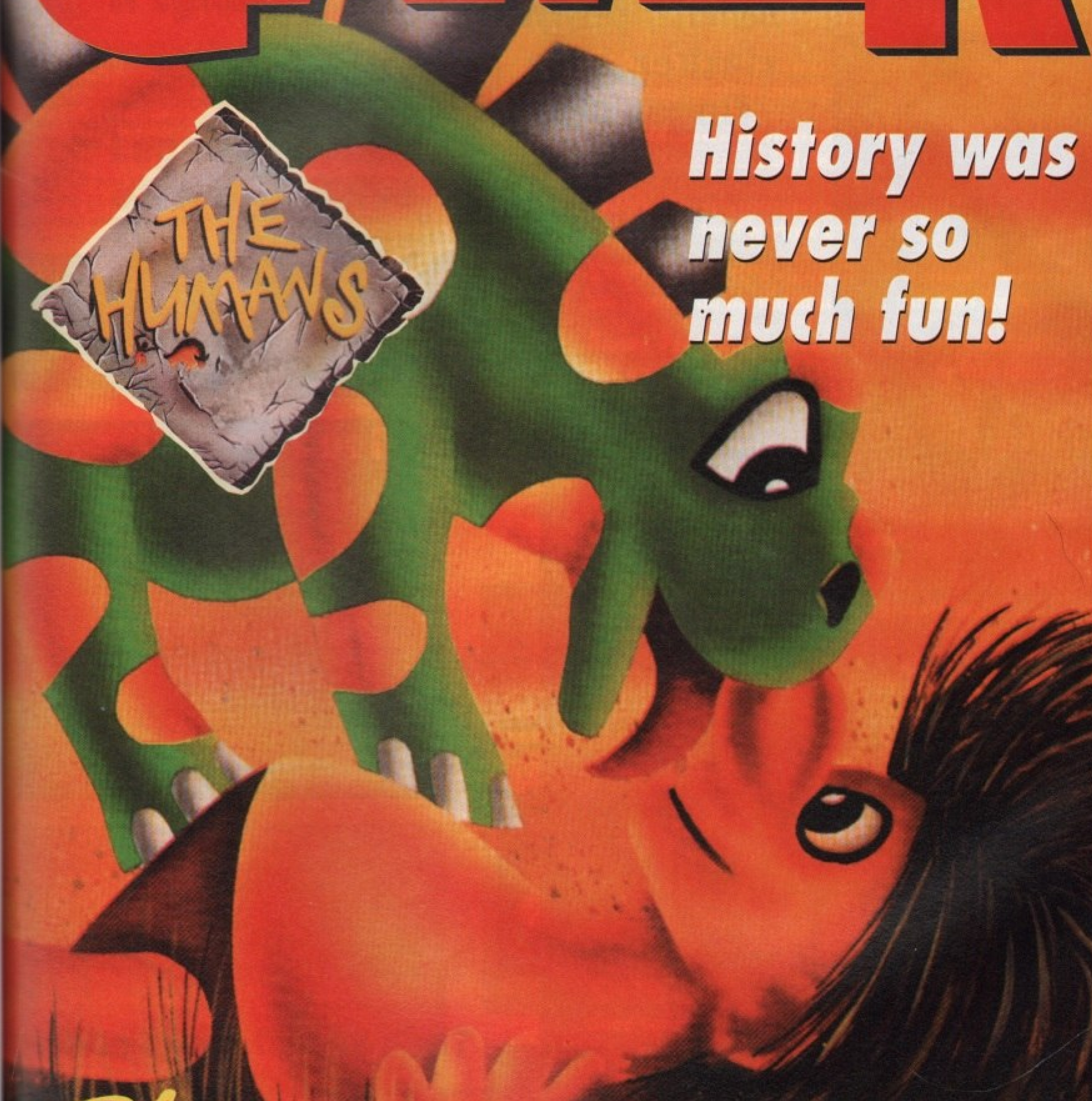
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ISSUE SIXTEEN ▪ JANUARY 1993

GAMER



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ALSO... *WE take a quick peak Reach for the Skies, check out the best joysticks and ask what the A1200 offers in the way of games. Oh...and cheatmode*

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ONword

Bah! humbug!



Banzii, plorn clacker, sore finger etc

Those wacky Japanese are back on the film making trail with the release of a new batch of Manga Videos. The cream of the crop seems to be the totally unpronounceable Urotsukidoji: Legend of the Overfiend

The story involves big beasties with moralistic problems, not to mention young men possessed by various devils who pour their energies into the bodies of young girls (yes, yes I know it sounds a bit fnar).

Every 3,000 years Chojin, the king of the monster world, attempts to bring together the three worlds in which the universe supposedly exists. This will produce a world of eternal debauchery violence and supernatural forces – a bit like the AC toilets really.

It's got all the usual Japanese violence with a bigger than average helping of sex thrown in. A possible rival to the mighty Akira

Lemmings II

The only game ever created that will stand the test of time better than Tetris, Lemmings is back with some IIIs after its name.

The new version leans a little more to the arcade side than the previous version, which has 12 different tribes of lemming, ranging from Beach Bums to Egyptians. You have to lead each tribe through eight levels – which makes a total of 96 levels to complete. Spooky eh?

And just to really confuse you, you no longer have the usual eight skills, climbers and so on – your lemmings have 50 different skills, some of which are specific to some tribes and others common to all. What fun.





Good lordy, it's a monster

I really like games that follow a horror filmy type of vein. So the forthcoming arcadey 3D thing from Ocean is going to be a corker as far as I'm concerned.

Old Dr Van Helsing, Dracula stabber himself, drove all of the nasty beasties – namely Frankenstein, Dracula, Wolf Man, The Mummy and the Creature from the Black Lagoon – into the underworld, the next door down from Biffa.

Then he performed an annual rite which kept them down there. But being a bit of a plonker, he forgot that he was going to pop his clogs. So when he did it was roll out the barrel for Drac and Co.

You take the role of Helsing's grandson and gatecrash Drac's blood and barmcake party to give him a good seeing to. You must find the pieces of the amulet which will keep them next door to Biffa forever.

Norses for courses

Enter the mystic world of Norse mythology in Ragnarok. Ragnarok is a indepth strategy board game and apparently offers a greater depth of gameplay and more visual appeal than chess. Adapted from the ancient 'Viking Game', the two sides of good and evil must do battle to the death. Each side has a different goal. Good have to guide Odin from his starting square in the centre of the board to one of the four corners whereas evil must prevent this from happening. Each piece has different strengths and abilities restricting it's movement and power over other pieces. Ragnarok can be played against a friend or you can play against one of the twelve computer controlled opponents. Ragnarok has been programmed by Imagitec Design and should be reviewed in this high quality magazine very soon. It will cost you £39.99 and should be out either just before or just after Christmas. Don't forget no norseing around.



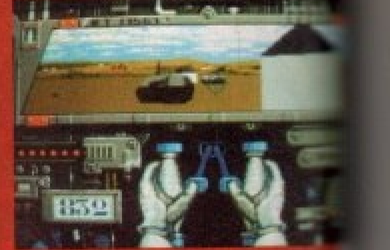
D-Day

The latest in a spate of war games is D-Day from Futura . You start as a foot soldier and progress through the game onward and upward to the level of supreme commander (in theory).

You can choose to be in the infantry, a paratrooper or take control of a tank, ship or plane. As you gain experience you will command entire divisions, go from one battlefield to another and eventually control a whole army.

From what I could glean the game seemed quite modular, so you could play it at various depths, so it will appeal to arcade and strategy types alike.





Game over, man...NOT!

Yes, indeed Hudson is not leaving because Alien Breed is back! Alien Breed – Special Edition 92 will hit the streets in mid November for the bargain price of £10.99. For those of you thinking that the game is identical to the original, think again because it's not. The Special Edition is enhanced with game-tweaks, new missions and new beasties. Twice the size of the original, Alien Breed – Special Edition 92 will undoubtly a huge success. Many pints of lager should be sent to Team 17 for re-writing the rules and being clever enough to think up the idea and perhaps some other companies should follow suit. Quality and quantity could well be their motto because other news is that Alien Breed 2 will appear in mid 93, but the next full price release from the 'Team' will be Superfrog and/or Body-Blows and will be available in January/February next year. It definately seems that Team 17 are one of the hardest working games companies around at the moment.

Serious? Oh no!

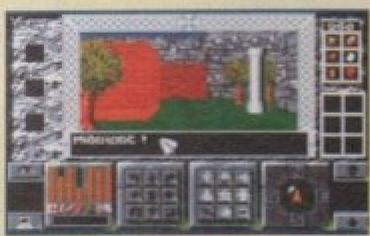
First things first. Your omnipresent Gamer is to change its format slightly this month with the introduction of a new page. The recent staff changes have forced the ever-ridiculous Gamer crew to take a slightly more serious approach.

But will this stop Biffa making references to Lager, or prevent Ben being a miserable sod? Oh no! Worry your little minds not!

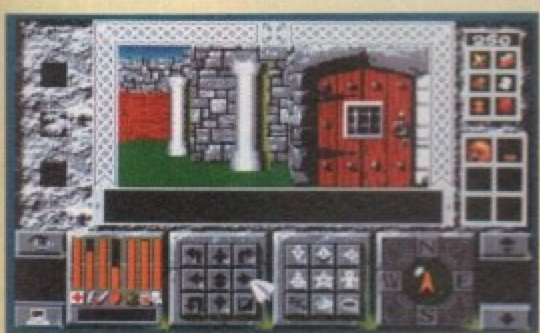
The charts are moving there from their usual place and it will be full of hints and tips you can't afford to miss. If you are stuck in an game anywhere we will try our best not to giggle and make you feel inadequate, but will answer your plea for help. So get writing.

Legend in their own disk drive

US Gold are really going for it at the moment. As if SF II wasn't stonking enough, soon to be seen is the massive RPG Legends of Valour, part one.



Designed by Kevin Bulmer, of Corporation fame and Resolution 101's Ian Downend, Legends is a veritable "virtual world" according to the golden ones. Well they would say that, but it does look big, and besides, any game that allows you to enter a tavern and get drunk is all right by me!



It's poptastic, mate!

It's more than likely that many of you have bought Populous 2 by Electronic Arts, but by now you've probably completed it or forgotten it. Well, it's time to find it again because those kind men and women at Electronic Arts have brought out a handy data disk. Populous 2 – The Challenge Games should be out around about now and it'll only cost you a mere £14.99. The Challenge Games are 42 special worlds that will once again put your strategic expertise to the test. Instead of helping your people to prosper and to destroy their enemies, this time your main goal is to help your people survive. Yep, your followers are faced by tidal waves, burning forests and hurricane winds, hmm I don't know sounds more like Florida to me. There are also 500 new worlds complete with brand spanking new 'Shogun' graphics, but remember you need the original game to play it. Populous fans, run down to your local computer shops right this minute, it's the bargain of the month.

The final flight sim?

Tornado, the flight sim to end all flight sims, is nearing completion. The boys at Digital Integration are still locked away deep in the Tornado dungeon, but hope to have made sufficient progress to be allowed home for a few hours at Christmas.

From what we've seen, the hard slog – over two years in development – will prove worthwhile with a massive hit.

The level of detail, features and speed should make this an essential purchase for every flight sim fan and may turn the heads of a good few non-simmers too. Coming to an Amiga near you early 1993

GAMER

INNER VISION

What'll be wiggling in your Christmas stocking?

REVIEWS

REGULARS

Bombs away – it's the...

DOODLE BUG

CORE DESIGN ▪ £25.99 ▪ ½ meg ▪ Joystick ▪ Out now

Doodlebugs. They were those strange looking bombs with wing-like things used in the Second World War, weren't they? And correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't the contemporary term refer to both the larva of an ant-lion, and indeed, a non-scientific device to aid in the location of minerals?

Impressed? Don't be – I found all this out from the dictionary. The first and only thing that sprang to mind when this disk arrived in the office was that awful song from a few years ago, whereby the banal chant "Do-do the doodlebug" was repeated about 300 times to the lacklustre rhythm of a couple of snare drums and an acoustic guitar.



Given the above information then, you would be forgiven for believing that this page is dedicated to a strategy game set around 1945, where you as the hero invade hostile territory atop a flying bomb in search of minerals (using your non-scientific device) which you must feed to the larva of an ant-lion.

Or possibly not. Doodle Bug is in fact a cartoony platformer set, astonishingly enough, in the colourful world of Cartoonia.

The king of Cartoonia is up in arms – his beautiful daughter, the Princess Lady-Bug, has been kidnapped, spirited away in the dead of night by a large shadowy figure with an evil cackle.

Herein lies the problem – obviously the king would like his daughter back fairly sharpish but Cartoonia, by its nature, is a bit short on large, shadowy evil people who might be up to the job of rescuing her.

You see, most inhabitants of this unlikely land are small, bright and friendly, and much better suited to working as a stunt double for Tweetie Pie than as a destroyer of dark overlords.

There's always one though isn't there? In this case it's you – a "brave little bug-like creature" who steps forward to answer the king's plea, namely to travel through distant lands battling with dozens of creatures about eight times your size until you reach the princess prison, where you must release her and return her to her ever-loving pappa.



Wahey! Watch out – the ice is dead slippy it is

The king is grateful of your offer – so grateful in fact that he promptly presents you with a few magic pencils and various other pieces of brightly coloured stationery to assist you on your quest.

A long-handled sword, a pocketful of grenades and the odd automatic weapon would have been nice, but hey – you got pencils! C'est la vie...

Toyland is your first port of call, and very nice it is too. Jack-in-the-boxes, aeroplanes, clowns, and that's just the nasty elements.

Things are moving around everywhere, and Doodle Bug can even get help from one or two of the nicer people in town who'll talk to him and give him advice.

It's here where you realise that the magic pencils aren't quite as useless as they first appeared. For instance, when thrown, the blue pencil turns into an umbrella which will slow down your descent should you, say, fall off a doll's house or something.

Other pencils will turn into balloons (to take you to higher places), potion bottles (for temporary invincibility) and stopwatches (freezes the enemies for a few seconds).

Don't despair if you find yourself in a tricky situation – Doodle Bug carries a rubber at all times which rather handily doubles as a kind of smart bomb for instant disposal of hostile creatures.

Other levels are in a similar vein – bright colours and cute creatures asunder rela… to the theme – Forbidden Forest an… Fortress of Doom to name but, erm... two.

What else then? Well, Doodle Bug ha… quite a nifty spin attack with which he ca… do away with his adversaries, and there… loads of stuff to collect such as money, ha… and power-ups, all of which add a little… your paltry armoury.

The sound throughout is really good – … the art girlie is driving me mad humm… the tune as I write. Amiga owners wil… chuffed with the number of effects, and the… graphics are great.

Although they don't come right out an… say it, I guess this game is aimed at the… younger market, just in time for Christmas…

The truth is, I had a good time playing… – it's a little bit easy, but fun, and there… loads going on so you, or your beloved… spring, won't become bored too quickly.

Pa…



What the hell are you looking at?



It's Esther Rantzen with a top hat



Hello little man, I'm the tree monster and I'm going to eat you up. Ha ha ha haa



"Excuse me, but can I borrow your shoes to go boating?"

VISION GGGG
In another era I could have said it was "bright and gay" without being laughed at.

AUDIO GGGG
Catchy tune and plenty of good FX, but there's always room for more.

PLAYABILITY GGGG
Plenty to do... simple to play... the list goes on

ADDICTION GGGG
I still keep sneaking a crafty game when no-one's looking.

83%



A sure sign of a misspent youth is a good pinball player, in which case I think our resident teenage delinquent/old man Dazza had a childhood similar to that of Oliver Twist.

Whereas I personally was a good, God-fearing child who never went anywhere near such things as the pinball machine – I was an Afterburner and Galaxinans man myself. Biff wasn't born, as he is a genetic experiment gone tragically wrong.

Alas there is no escaping the simulation bandwagon, and one must put up with such things. All right, I admit it, it's very good. In fact as far as simulations go this is one of the most realistic I've seen... I'm more used to seeing rubbish football manager games and flight sims with the minimum specification being a MENSA member.

On starting the game you have the choice of four tables. They all act like the real thing, and none is easier than the others.

Your playing screen is the view you would normally have of a real table. You can't see all of it at once as you could in the older console-type pinball games, but this means you get a closer, clearer view of the part you are concerned with.

The table scrolls with the ball when you knock it up the table with the flippers. You might think that this would be a bit confusing to watch, but the scrolling is silk smooth.

Graphically the game is fantastic and all the illustrations on the bed of the machine are colourful. The ball's movement is perfectly smooth, even though on some of the tables it gets flung around at a hell of a rate.

I played first on table two. The theme here is rally driving, and an unusual feature is extra flipper which involves a hell of a lot of skill to use it effectively. When using the other flipper it was almost as though you were playing independently of the lower table – you could get massive scores at the top.

Themes of the other tables are a game show, horror setting and theme park, all with their little quirks. A lot of the time you not only control the flippers but also small games of skill further up the table, like moving the light which the ball will run over – very simple but very effective.

I think the only thing lacking is a multiball sequence with two or more balls on the screen, but it's understandable why they didn't do this as multiball scrolling would be a nightmare.

To polish off their product 21st Century have added cracking theme tunes, even a creepy one for the horror table. Also they've got a direct sample of the flipper noises, so as you can imagine it's pretty convincing. The music itself at first sounds pretty dodgy but they are very cleverly written and irritatingly catchy tunes.

If you have Pinball Dreams there might not be much point buying Pinball Fantasies, but if you were madly in love with it then this is probably well worth a look because of the extra features it offers.

Ben

He's the Pinball Wizard

PINBALL FANTASIES

Psygnosis • £25.99 • 1 Meg
Mouse • Out Now

VISION
Clear graphics, precise and colourful, not in the least bit cloggy. Just how they should be.

AUDIO
Cracking little tunes on all of the tables, and very realistic sound effects.

PLAYABILITY
Easy, the least amount of controls since Space Invaders.

ADDICTION
Yes, you will come back again and again.

90%







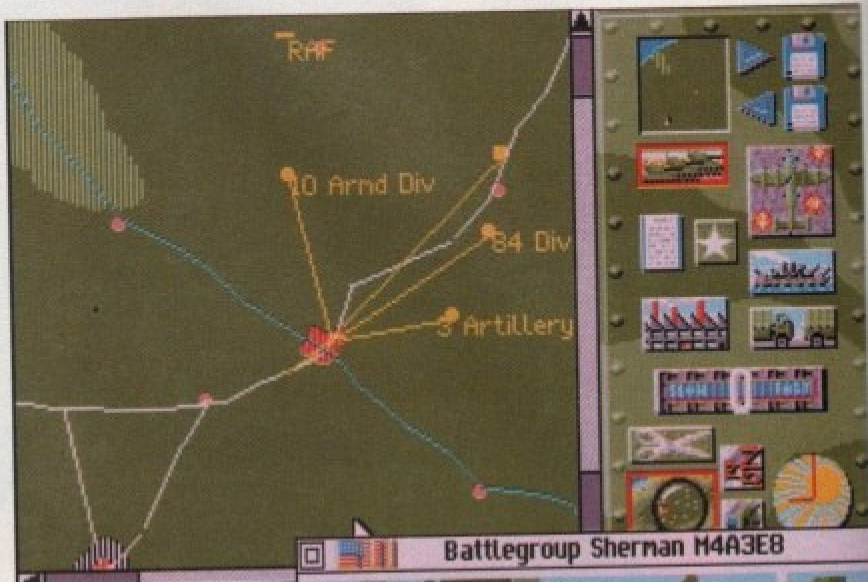
Tank you very much, it's...

Campaign

EMPIRE ▪ £34.99 ▪ ½ meg ▪ Mouse/keyboard ▪ Out now



'Ere stop Russian about in that tank...



Interesting Map No 657 – Grimbsy

War. What is it good for? Absolutely nothing, except for the loads and loads of ace wartime simulations involving killing multitudes of the enemy.

Yes, you can be transported back in time to the early 40s and fight World War II against the Bosh. Yes indeed, for only £34.99 you can go and show Hitler exactly what you think of him. A bargain. Re-live the war without any chance of getting blown up or shot at.

Computer games – I love 'em. You can be transported to space one minute and then off to the Middle Ages and then win the war and still be back home in time for tea.

There are two types of war game – the run around, shoot lots of soldiers and watch the blood fly everywhere type, like Fireforce, and the climb into a tank or plane and strategically win the war that way by looking at maps and deciding which tactics to use against the enemy type.

Campaign is of the latter kind and is billed on the box as the most comprehensive military simulation of warfare in World War II. Well it could be true, but you'll just have to wait until the end of the review to find out.

Basically Campaign is a pure strategy game, but it does have a certain "arcade" element to it. This so-called "arcade" bit is where you take control of the tank platoons and choose any tank to run around in blowing other tanks up.

More about that later. Job-wise, Campaign is very flexible. Indeed, if you want to be a lowly tank driver then that's up to you, but you can take the position of a General or even take the top job as Field Marshall – or you can do all three!

As General, you control the fighting of an individual battle with tanks plus artillery and air support. As the Field Marshall, not only do you stay about 35 miles away from the battle supping tea and scoffing biscuits without any fear of getting shot or blown up you also get to co-ordinate the strategy for all the tanks, convoys, aircraft, ships and production centres. Lowly tank driver is the



Here's a Sherman M4 Tank, something you wouldn't want to meet on a dark night



Our German friend gets down to the latest tunes from Nirvana. Ja, mit da lights aus, ist less dangerous...



Here is the Mosquito plane. I could make a pun about insects here, but I won't



job for me though, going wild in a nice big tank with a nice big gun blowing away the enemy for King and Country and shouting "Yah boo sucks" to the Hun.

It's much more exciting than sitting behind a desk looking at maps, but that's only a personal opinion.

To be perfectly honest I'm not a huge fan of proper strategy games, but I liked Campaign for two reasons. One, it had a bit of action in it, unlike some other strategy games I could mention, and two, it is so damn authentic.

For starters, included in the package is the user guide which gives a historical background to the war. You also get two World War II propaganda posters and postcards, plus a D-Day landings battle plan map – you even get an authentic wartime newspaper reprint.

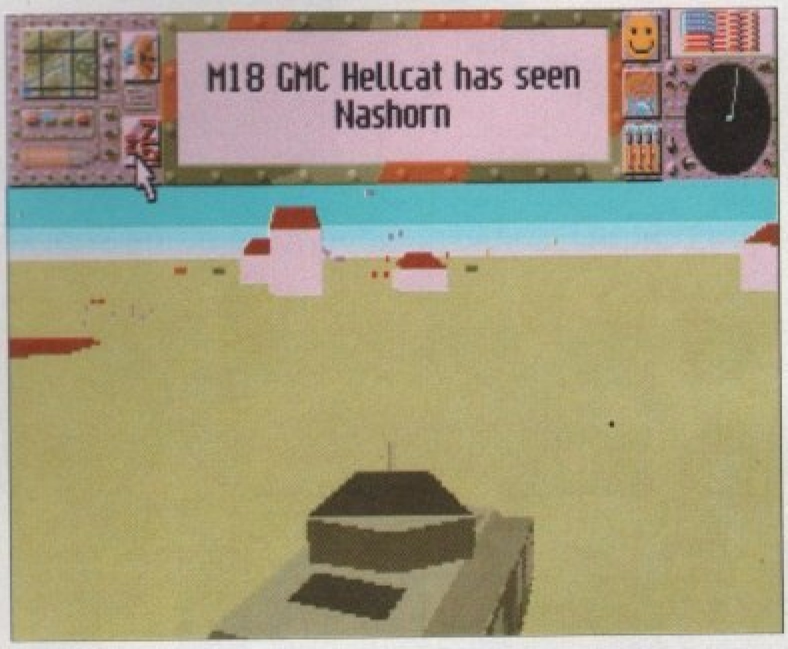
You certainly feel more involved with the game than you would with just a couple of disks and a flimsy manual. Obviously a lot of work has gone into Campaign in trying to make it as real as possible. This must have taken a lot of research and also a lot of time.

For instance, you get another manual with all the tanks, aircraft and ships in it which it gives you all sorts of information on each one, ranging from speed to weight to the date it was first available. As well as being informative it also serves as the manual protection.

Everything is just so accurate and absolutely huge. For instance the playing area covers up to an amazing ten million square kilometres and features detailed towns, villages, rivers and woodland.

You can take full command of up to 3,000 vehicles of which there are over 150 vehicle types on over 20 historically accurate maps. Locations of the maps range from the desert wastes of the Sahara to the decisive D-day landings. And if that isn't enough there is a map editor which allows you to modify the existing maps and create new ones of your own, so the possibilities are endless.

In fact if you fancy it you can even swap sides and take control of the German army. Just think you could be a Hitler re-incarnate. Gusp!



Ah, time to turn those Barrett homes into rubble. Ha ha ha, oh they already are rubble...



Right, back to the "arcade" tank driving bit. If any of you have seen Pacific Islands, also by Empire, then you'll realise by looking at the screenshots that the tank bit of the game looks very similar.

Well, yes it is, but that's not a bad thing is it, because Pacific Islands was pretty good as well. The actual driving of the tank is really easy and simply involves nine keys of the keyboard. After a few plays of the game it becomes second nature. Oh and I can recommend blowing up some houses in the town, just for laugh.

So is Campaign going to be as victorious as our good old British Tommies were, or will it end up growing a small moustache and shooting itself in a small bunker in Berlin?

Well overall this is a really good game, but I'm afraid a lot of people tend to ignore this type of thing. They probably think that strategy is for incredibly boring people, but it's not true – that's just stereotyping strategy fans.

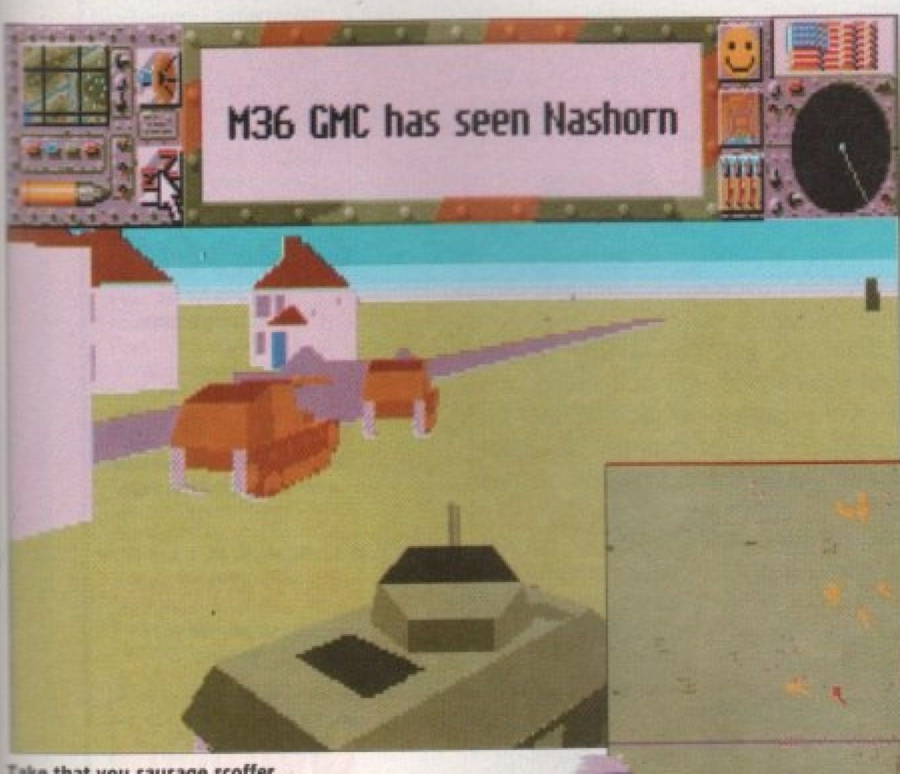
Right, if people get over their strategy fears then I think that Campaign could become a good seller and could be up the charts before you know it.

The only niggle that I have is that after a few hours play it tended to get a bit boring, – no, not boring exactly, but I started losing interest.

Other than that I can't really complain – top marks go to the actual presentation of the game, plus I forgot to mention the excellent introduction disk that comes with it. It features some great graphics and some sampled speech and is a good, err, introduction to the game.

So, if you feel like you want to go and bash the Bosh and defeat the evil tyrant Hitler, Campaign could well be the game for you. Tank you and goodnight

Jonathan



Take that you sausage scoffer...



Interesting Map No 1902 - How to find a McDonald's with a tank parking area



VISION

Nice 3D polygon graphics plus an amazing introduction disk.

AUDIO

Err, not much I'm afraid, but what there is is quite good.

PLAYABILITY

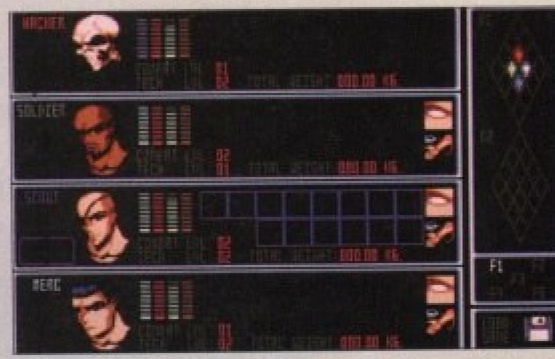
Very playable indeed, but takes a while to get used to.

ADDICTION

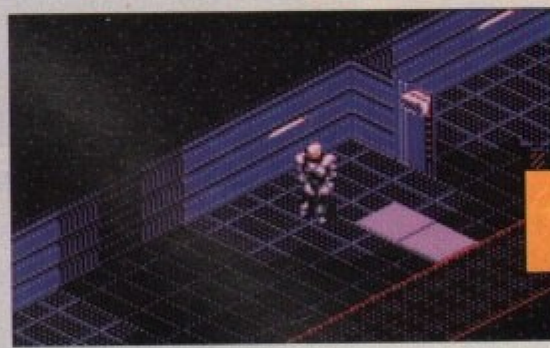
It is addictive, but your interest might go slightly off the rails.

85%





There's your motley crew,sounds like a g name for a Heavy Meta band...



Fun with doors and don't mean jumping into bed with Jim Morrison!

Hank Marvin in 3D isometric adventure game shocker!

SHADOW WORLDS

KRISALIS ▪ £25.99 ▪ 1 meg ▪ Mouse ▪ Out now

Cast your minds way back to April's issue of Gamer and you might remember Shadowlands, a brilliant adventuring role playing game reviewed by yours truly. I gave it 94per cent and a Gamer Gold.

Well hold on to your bits and pieces, because here for your enjoyment and entertainment is Shadow worlds by Krisalis.

It's a sort of a sequel – I say "sort of" because it doesn't follow the storyline from the original, although it does use the same game routines. Saving grace is that it has different graphics because it's set in space.

Space, the final frontier and all that business, but in Shadow Worlds things have changed. There is no need for Captain Kirk to run around chasing Klingons or for Luke Skywalker to battle with the Empire, because now there is universal peace.

Yep, aliens hold quiet and pleasant coffee mornings and every man, woman, child and squidgy blob are happy in the knowledge that they are united as one. There's a "but" coming up very soon.

Peace, love and happiness crusades across the universe, but (there it is!) mysterious forces are at work in the outer reaches of the galaxy.

Someone in the government decided to open himself a nice little weapons development centre. Everything was quiet, in fact a little too quiet – last week all communication with the centre dropped off and the crew working there have disappeared.

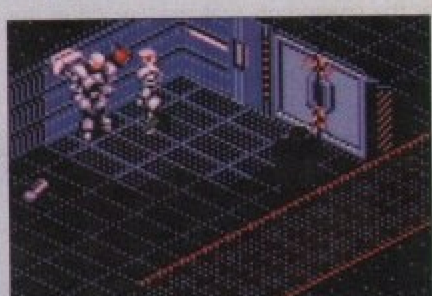
This event is definitely not good news for the authorities who are trying to keep the peace, and a centre full of unguarded weapons is a bit like giving a camera to Madonna and asking her to take pictures of the landscape.

So they decide to send in an expendable task force. That's you and four companions. They are a bit of an odd bunch, ranging from dribbling psychotic serial killers to beautiful "wouldn't hurt a fly" clairvoyants.

There you have it, Shadow Worlds story all told. But what about the actual game? You control your four warriors using the mouse. At the bottom of the screen are graphics of your four brave warrior and a icon of a figure.

This is used to control the movement and actions of your men/women. Clicking on the legs means you can move either an individual character or all of them at once.

Clicking on arms allows you to pick up and drop objects and also manipulate objects while clicking on the head allows you to look at objects and enemies and also read the computer monitors which are liberally dotted about the place.



Talk about leaving people in the dark...

Your view of the playing area is at a funny angle, but works well. You actually look down and across at your warriors, which enables you to see everything around them.

What I've forgotten to mention is the light. No, I've not turned into a American evangelist, I'm talking about light as in torch or lamp. In Shadow Worlds it is called Super Photoscaping, and the light actually works in real time.

For instance, the light on your helmet will move around the room as soon as you move your man. It is powered by batteries and as they aren't Duracells they only last for a short time.

As your batteries run out the helmet light gets dimmer, which makes the game that little bit more interesting. You also have to use the light to solve puzzles and problems along the way.

Right, time to put on my Brian Walden impression and ask lots of questions and query the quality of Shadow Worlds. Is it any good? Is it let down by bad playability? Is it fun to play? Does it whiff of stale cheese?

The answers would be yes, no, yes and definitely not. Shadoworlds is more or less a director's cut of Shadowlands. Tiny bits and bobs have been added, and it does vary slightly due to the different theme.



Ah, let's throw a bit of light on the subject...

It does, however, play almost exactly like Shadowlands, but seeing as that was absolutely brilliant there are no worries on that score.

If you loved Shadowlands then you'll kill for Shadoworlds. It really is one of the best isometric adventure games around at the moment. Th only reason I'm giving it 90 per cent an not 94 per cent is because it isn't all th much different from theoriginal.

But it's still worth a Gamer Gold.

Jonath

VISION

Top marks for the Photoscaping system.

AUDIO

Not much audio but there are a few sound effects in there.

PLAYABILITY

It's that playable you'll go blind.

ADDICTION

You won't put it down until you complete it.

94%



It's the Chippendales



The choice of lovely men for you to Command, cute aren't they?



Smoke more Embassies than Alex Higgins with.....

SABRE TEAM

KRISALIS • £25.99 • 1 meg • Mouse • Out now

Not the only offering we've had this month that is having an identity crisis. This one thinks it's an arcade run-jump-and-shoot game, but little does it know that it's really a strategy speciality that will have you tearing your hair out with startling regularity.

For those you who don't know what a Sabre Team is, I shall explain. It is one of the formations that the SAS use to diffuse many political flash points, diffuse meaning killing everyone who looks a bit threatening.

The team is a group of four crack commandos who have at their disposal a vast array of armaments – guns, bazookas and machine guns that look like they belong on the top of a tank.

All the gear's there, but what about the game? Well, all kitted out you have to parachute your men into the action zone.

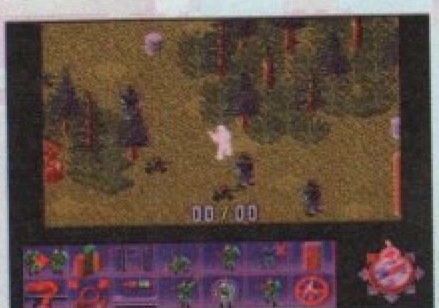
That's simple enough, you just choose where they are going to land and off you go. You view the playing area at a 45 degree angle with quite a high perspective similar to Shadow Lands or Space Crusade

After you have chosen the four to carry out the mission you have to equip them. This is where the strategy kicks in. You must choose weapons that aren't going to slow your men down too much but still provide enough firepower to do the job. The job usually being to turn lots of foreigners into sieves.

As I said before you have a pretty awesome weapons package, everything from CS gas and stun grenades to pistols and machine guns of all shape and size.

Each of the characters you control has a certain amount of points which allow him to move and do anything he wants to do, which is shoot people.

This action points setup is one of the few things I disliked about the game – it's a good idea which doesn't work very well in practice. For example, if you were to walk five paces in a northerly direction it would cost you five action points.



Kirk to Scotty, beam me up

Fair enough, but sometimes just turning round can cost you several points, so once you've just turned on the spot to shoot somebody you might not have enough points left to shoot them. I don't like this because it takes away a little of the arcade action.

But if that's not what you're playing the game for then fair enough – it takes a more strategic mind to uses your points more carefully.

Along the bottom of the screen are icons which depict the actions that your character can carry out such as pick up, drop, throw, and you have a graphical representation of each of the men which shows the state of their health.

There are other things to keep an eye on, for instance if one of your compass points goes blue it means that the character you are controlling has heard something in that direction.



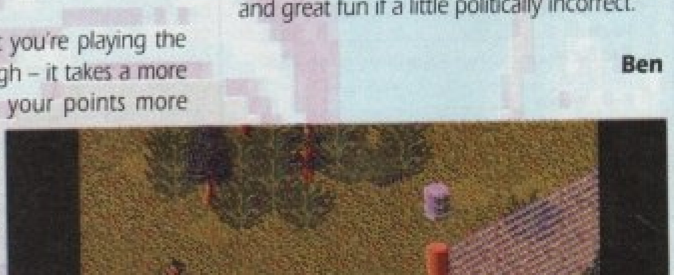
This tells you what your enemies are doing. They're getting shot most of the time

You move each of your characters in turn. Their action points depend on how healthy they are and how weighed down with equipment – so make sure you don't have them carrying five machine guns at once as I did.

There are five scenarios – an embassy siege, a hostage situation on a boat, a ground hostage situation and two other search and destroy missions. Some of them will be marksmen and some of them will be totally bogeyed like me.

Sabre team is one of the best arcade/strategy crossovers I've seen. Infinitely playable and great fun if a little politically incorrect.

Ben



United Nations relations at their best

VISION

Well done, clear characters even thought they are small.

AUDIO

A bit sparse but a tune would ruin it.

PLAYABILITY

A little slow for the arcade types otherwise fine.

ADDICTION

Definitely, because of the depth you'll always come back.

84%

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Right: Dinosaur steaks, dinosaur steaks – it's all we ever have. What about some chicken or a nice veggy burger?





Longer in production than they were in evolution – finally...

HUMANS

MIRAGE . £29.99 . 512k . joystick/keyboard . out now

In the few short months during which it has been my humble privilege to serve the mighty Gamer, barely a couple of days have gone by without some desperate soul dragging him or herself over to the damp and rancid corner in which my Victorian schooldesk nestles lopsidedly, and asking – imploring – open mouthed and eyes agog, as to whether Humans had yet arrived.

I'm not a sick man by any stretch of the imagination (our survey disagrees – Ed) but I have to admit to feeling a dark satisfaction at the look of anguish and emptiness that sank deep into their faces as I pressed my lips together and glumly shook my head.

Frankly, I couldn't understand why these people were getting their undergarments in such a twist – we've got literally cupboards full of games to while away those dull lunchtimes. And Friday afternoons. And Monday mornings.

Then I saw a demo version and the scales were lifted from my eyes: I became one of those sad people, carrying out my duties with a heavy heart and tortured soul – knowing that my life would be incomplete until the day of arrival, er... arrived.

That day is now here, so with nerve ends a-tingling and eyes lifted gratefully to the heavens, let us without further ado boot up our collective Amiga and see if it's all been worth the wait.

Humans is an 80 level puzzly platform affair along the lines of – dare I say it – Lemmings. You control a small tribe of some of the very first human inhabitants on our planet, and the idea is very simple – you have to evolve.

Easy enough to do when you have a good few million years to spare – simply exist and produce a few babies and the job's a good 'un, but it's a bit more tricky than that when you work all day and have to do the evolving at night on a computer.

Beginning with just a few paltry pot-bellied moronic cavemen, you must help them to complete certain tasks before moving on to the next level.



No open air baths in those days, but a dip in the lava pool may prove stimulating

Many of the tasks simply involve moving your tribe to a different section of the screen. Sound easy? Don't you believe it – remember, this is 20 trillion or so BC and there isn't exactly a lot of help available in the form of implements and the like.

You see, it's all very well if one happens to be, say, that Super Mario chap; any problems he comes across can usually be solved by finding a magic laser gun or some such nonsense, but the time in which Humans is set is just a little bit before laser guns and hoverbikes were invented.

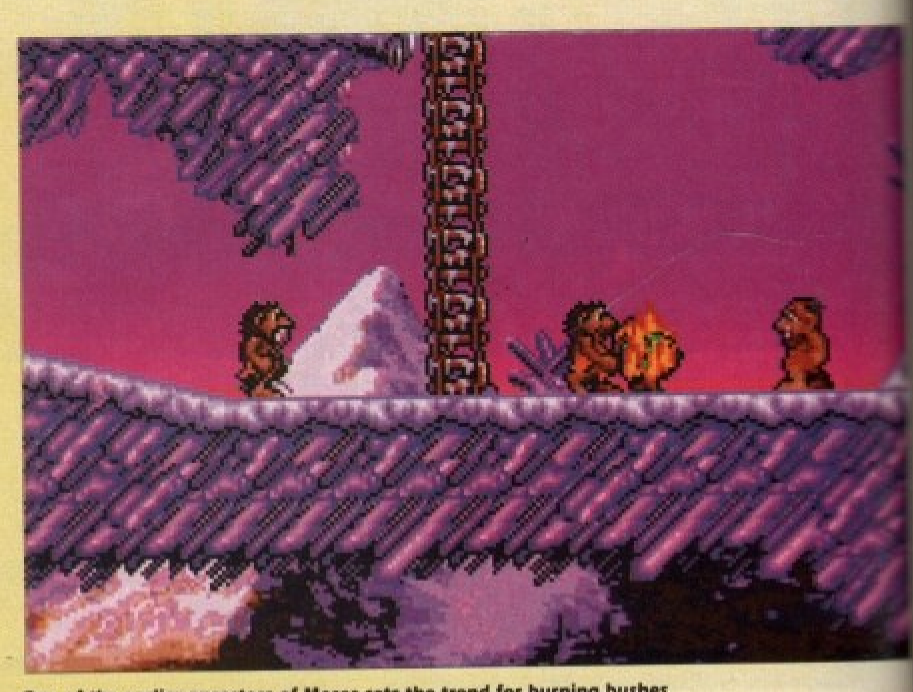
Puzzles are solved by using whatever you happen to "discover". For example, the first discovery you are likely to make will be a spear. This is very handy indeed for stabbing things, but could it have more uses do you think? Well you'll have to find out – that's the idea, see!

Once you are in possession of any item, it will stay with you throughout the whole game: your collection of discoveries will grow as you progress – each one is needed to solve the levels you reach after finding it. Geddit?

You will begin the game with only four humans in your tribe. The sprites themselves are very small but brilliantly detailed with pot bellies, flyaway hairstyles, a big nose and a great expression of perpetual surprise.

Obviously only one human at once can be controlled, requiring much toggling of the cursor keys in order to shift all the little chaps to their destination. This can be a bit of a pain, but is offset by the multidirectional scrolling as different humans are located on screen.

More tribe members can be added by rescuing fellow cave dwellers who have



One of the earlier ancestors of Moses sets the trend for burning bushes



Early Polo mint origins here. There's nothing more refreshing than a rock with a hole in it



Duh – I wonder what happens if I put my hand into this orange crackly thing

VISION

GGGGG

Brilliant throughout with bonus animation to boot

AUDIO

GGGG

Nice tunes and hilarious special effects

PLAYABILITY

GGGG

Keyboard control is laborious, but simple – if that makes sense!

ADDICTION

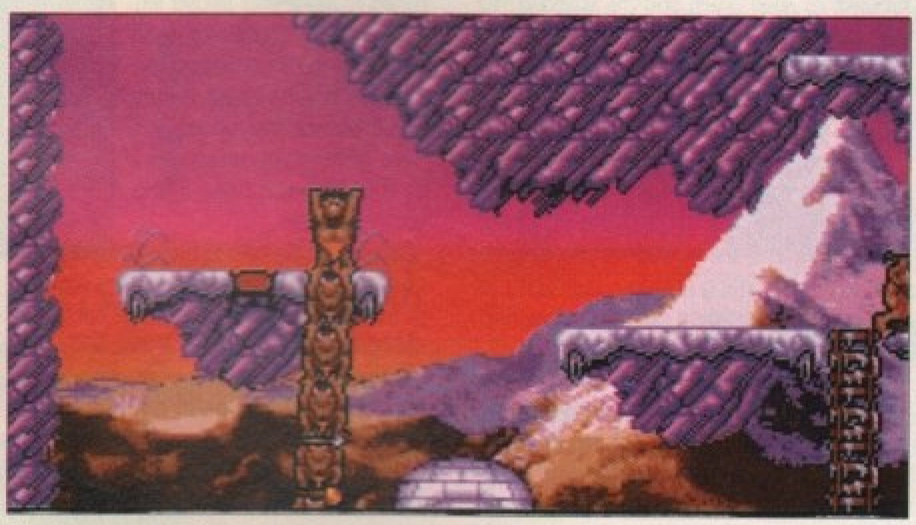
GGGGG

Set your alarm for mealtimes or you'll waste away

92%



These boys are looking worried. I wouldn't fancy taking one on the head from that baby



The first stuntmen. Now all we need is a motorbike

become trapped in many of the levels; in some cases the actual rescue completes the mission on that particular level, in others you may still have a destination to reach.

Once you have begun to make some headway and the size of your tribe increases, it isn't necessary to use all the humans to complete a task. Good job too, since there are any number of ways of dying, and you'll find you need plenty of reserves to keep going.

There is always the danger that your tribe will become extinct. This happens when you don't have enough humans to complete a certain level, and therefore cannot progress any further.

Hurrah and huzzah for the trusty old password system is what I say – you will be kindly provided with a password after every level which is invaluable if you are to refrain for any length of time from hurling your hardware through the window.

One of the features that I was most impressed with is the many different ways in which your tribe can utilise their discoveries. By clicking on the icons at the bottom of the playscreen you will find that, among other things, they can throw, jump, climb, ride (!), push, carry and kill.

The latter of these attributes is very important, as you will find yourself battling against and dodging all manner of strange and hostile creatures. Other tribes exist, and from time to time one of their members may decide that his family deserve something a little more than dinosaur steak for tea – something a little more tender, if you're getting my drift.

Speaking of dinosaurs, keep your eyes open for any you might encounter – it's worth sacrificing one of your tribe members just to hear the hilarious gobbing sounds it makes as he is devoured piece by piece.

Looks like it's time to sum things up then; lets talk about the graphics first – they're brilliant. One thing I haven't mentioned so far is that the game is spread not only over 80 screens but also in six different scenarios – cave, desert, summer, winter, forest and swamp, in which the details are brilliant.

As if all this wasn't enough, whenever your tribe completes a particularly important task you are rewarded with a funny little animated sequence. The only drawback to this is that it involves a lot of disk-swapping: best idea is to see these a couple of times and then turn the animation off. (Another little option from your kindly chums at Mirage).

You are given the choice of music or FX. The music comes in the form of numerous jaunty/jolly tunes that I think make the game more fun. All the FX are clear and funny, but a good few more would have been very welcome.

As for the game itself, I can't say enough about it. The humour, easiness to play and progressive difficulty of the puzzles should appeal to fans of just about every genre – even the strategists among you who may be happy for a welcome break from the norm.

Buy it soon, and if you're not happy send me a cyanide Mars Bar through the post.

Paul



Did you know that the world's first prisoner was found guilty of pteradactyl abuse?



Bommerang bludgeonary galore with the...

ASSASSIN

Team 17 ▪ £ ▪ ½ meg ▪ Out now



A single pearly tear wells in the eye of a caring newscaster as yet another body of a ravaged child is pulled from the debris of a shellshocked building in war-torn Sarajevo.

Angry defiant women converge on news cameras, asking in the name of God what kind of person would do this... and why? The camera pans around to reveal the remains of an army barracks on the Ulster border that still smoulders as the dead and wounded are rushed away by grim-faced paramedics.

Whlie the Democrats and Republicans continue to smear their respective parties, each one looking more stupid by the day, the inhabitants of a small suburban town in an unfashionable state of the USA mourn the relatives and friends lost in the devastation caused by the deadly combination of a madman and a gun. Without a doubt there is a lot of violence on our planet, and the world of computer games is no exception. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to review an adventure promoting peace and harmony? Or a nice little program specially designed to re-unite the whole population?

Nah, it'd probably be dead boring – spend a good few hours finding your way through the various levels, earning bonus points for being polite and handing out food parcels only to be confronted by the end-of-game boss who's doing everything in his power to avoid being presented with the bunch of flowers you brought him.

Team 17 think so too – that's why those kindly (and slightly mad) gentlemen who brought us Alien Breed and the stonking Project X have decided to let Sting and Bob Geldof concentrate on saving the world, while they get on with the task of producing murderous romps – this time in the form of Assassin.

You will be informed at the outset by the excellent sampled speech that the evil Midan, whoever he may be, lies deep in his underground lair, and that it's up to you to go in with, er... boomerang ablazing, destroying his cronies and finally taking out the chap himself. Coo, sounds like a bit of a challenge.

Well, that doesn't bother you much – after all, you are an assassin. So in you go like any brainless hardcase should, hanging casually off the bottom of a chopper and chewing a match while tattooing yourself with a rusty spoon.

Once behind enemy lines you are alone with only the aforementioned boomerang to ward off hideous death by a hundred various methods. It's actually quite a good weapon – not like those crappy things rich relatives bring back from Australia that have a lower return rate than dirty books from a library.

Although quite weedy to begin with, plenty of power-ups are scattered around the levels that give it extra strength, speed, length of travel etc.

Beginning in the forest after dropping from the chopper, your assassin is met by gun-toting nasties who seem a little confused as to where the trigger on their weapon is. After approaching angrily and looking just about ready to use your leg as a toothpick, they seem to lose all enthusiasm for their task and proceed to prod you meekly with the barrel of their guns.

It's a different story with the dogs though – they just won't let go and are absolutely determined to make your trouser leg their own. The sounds are dead realistic too– loud barks and nasty flesh-wrenching noises that made me want to go and hide behind my mum like I used to do when I saw a dog down our street.

Now that I'm on the subject I must say that all the sound effects are good, as indeed are the graphics – big bold-as-you-like sprites on colourful and detailed parallax backgrounds. The end of level bosses are awesome, using some of the best graphics you're likely to see in this type of game

Assassin-dude is a pretty impressive guy too. He can run like the clappers, jump like a jack-in-the-box, hang from ceilings like a monkey and stick to walls like a... like a... erm, thing that sticks to walls really well.

As well the trusty boomerang, you can collect Mega Weapon power-ups throughout the whole game which allow you to wipe out hordes of gits at one go.

Each level is set progressively further into Midan's lair, until you eventually find yourself in the horrible labyrinth. People to watch out for in particular are the doctor who just wants to give you a little prick, the skeleton geezer and probably the last working miner in Britain.

You are probably aware by now that Assassin is far from an original concept in gaming; however, with top notch graphics, nice FX, difficulty settings and a choice of how many lives to begin with. It's an extremely appealing product nevertheless and should make fans of arcadey adventure-style shooty-uppies very happy for a good while.

Paul



You'll need your wits about you to defeat the end-of-level party streamer



'Ere, what's your game – are you hittin' on my missus?



Get off! get off! Can't you find yourself a female dog?

VISION (5/5)
Lovely, super, smashing, great.

AUDIO (3/5)
V. nice intro music, smart FX, but lacks an in-game tune.

PLAYABILITY (5/5)
Oodles of manoeu-vres that are dead easy to do.

ADDICTION (4/5)
Any game that allows you to kill dogs is all right by me

85%

POWER UP

Whatever else it may be, the all-singing all-dancing A1200 heralds the advent of an exciting new era in gaming. Paul Roundell feigns intelligence and dons his deerstalker in an attempt to find out more

Commodore call it the AGA. The industry calls it the double A. To me it's just the new Amiga. Officially named the A1200 and retailing at just a penny short of £400 – you'll no doubt be wiser than I am after getting the complete low-down in this very magazine – the machine is compatible with about 60 per cent of existing Amiga titles.

But its mega-powerful 32-bit capabilities mean we're in for some stonking great new games too – if anybody bothers to develop them that is. Let's find out what's first in line...



Mindscape

Three new games out soon from Mindscape – Battletoads, Wing Commander and The Miracle. Enhanced versions of all three will be available, but that's about all we know at this stage.

Gremlin

Gremlin welcome the introduction of the A1200. Boss Ian Stewart was recently quoted in CTW opining the importance of Commodore strengthening their brand.

Nigel Mansell and smash hit Zool (97 per cent, AC November) will be available for the machine in enhanced form before Christmas.

Gremlin are fast establishing a reputation for producing some of the best products around – anyone who has seen Zool will understand why.

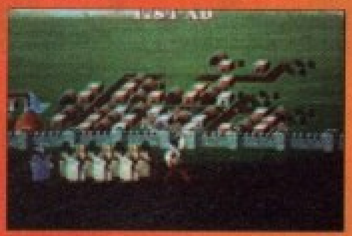
If such excellence can be achieved on a "bog standard" Amiga, who knows what heights they can reach with the new hardware? It'll be more spectacular than anything we're seen before. Can't wait to find out.

Microprose

An A1200 version of Civilisation (93 per cent, AC September) is currently in development at the company's Gloucestershire headquarters.

As well as utilising the advanced graphics and 256-colour capabilities, the game will include a "Civilopedia", explaining the 988 concepts used throughout the game. Latest information leads us to believe it should be available by the time you're reading this.





More Civilised than ever with 256 colours and a couple of extra features to boot

Ocean

The three big imminent Ocean releases are all set to be frilled up – Lethal Weapon, WWF and Cool World will all be making appearances in enhanced form in the near future.

Managing Director Gary Bracey says that as Commodore begin to really push the machine in the new year, Ocean will begin to develop specifically, but not at the expense of other formats.

A brand new golf game could be the first specific title we see coming out of the posh end of Manchester sometime next year.



System 3

With the highly original Putty (92 per cent, AC December) among the front runners for the Christmas top spot, System 3 are cautious about their plans for the A1200.

Director Adrian Cale pointed out that although no specific version of the stretchy tomfoolery has been developed, Putty is nonetheless compatible with the machine.

All subsequent System 3 releases will be compatible with the machine, although they prefer to gauge public response before throwing all their weight behind it.

A favourable response could mean that we see an A1200-specific Ferrari GP Challenge next Spring.

Should you be a race game fan,that should be enough to provide you to get a 1200!

Electronic Arts

One of the most consistent software houses in terms of quality product, EA were responsible along with Bullfrog for the damn-near legendary Populous, which turned many a meek gamester into a screeching megalomaniac. The two have teamed up once again to bring Syndicate to the A1200.

It's a game of industrial espionage, whereby you as the leader of a covert syndicate manipulate the population of your nation state in an attempt to undermine society.

Up to eight players can take part in this high-resolution 3D manipulate-'em-up that promises yet again to bring out the worst in us all.

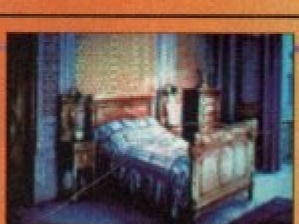
Millenium

Daughter of Serpents – an epic and mystical adventure recently released on the PC, is set to make a new year appearance on the A1200.

If the hype is to be believed, we will be treated to a true photographic quality 256-colour story set in Alexandria, Egypt.

The player becomes involved in murderous deeds and centuries-old skullduggery and must unearth sordid and evil secrets to restore the equilibrium of the holy land.

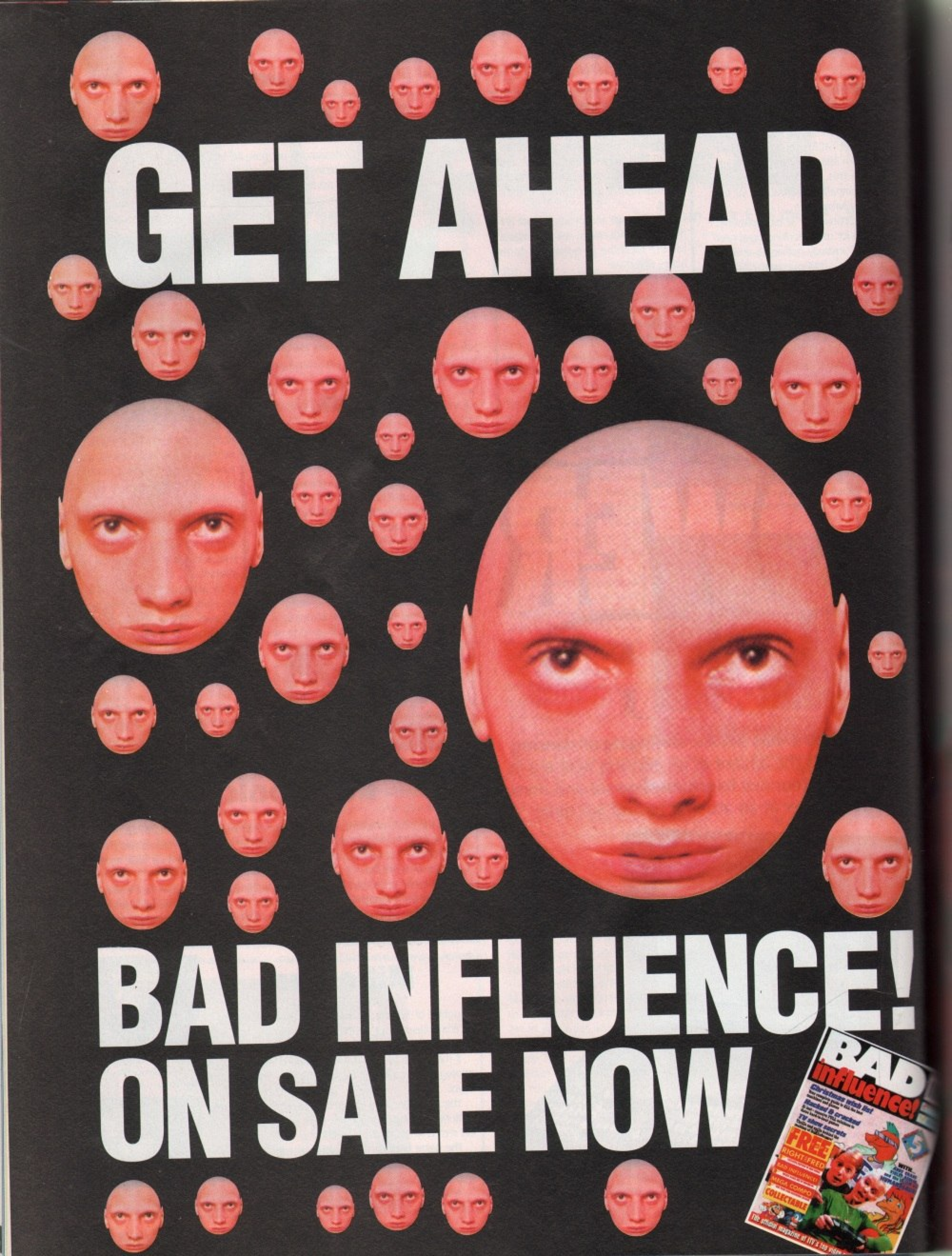
The game has been meticulously researched, sporting original 1920s film material, and should be available sometime in March.



Daughter of Serpents – bringing a new dimension to RPGs on the Amiga



The graphics will be matched by an atmospheric soundtrack


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The game with the hourglass figure

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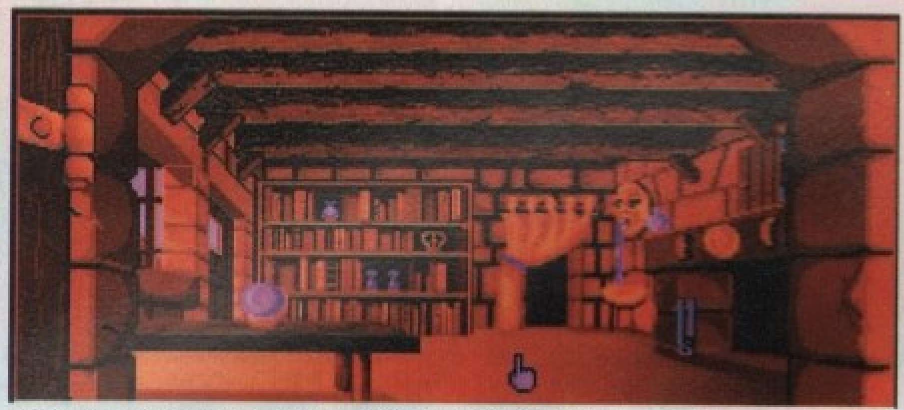
Have you noticed just how many adventure/RPG games there are knocking about nowadays? In case you haven't I'll tell you – blooming loads, that's how many, and a happy fact is that the quality seems to be getting better and better.

Actually, if you're anything like me then this isn't always good news. It's very easy to decide which product to buy when there's only a couple of decent choices on the market, but take a look through the rest of Gamer – there isn't a bad mark to be seen.

If I were a punter (to use a technical term) I'd probably spend hours dithering over which game looked that little bit better and then end up buying two or three, thus scuppering my Friday night beer feast because all my money was in the till at the compo shop. Am I waffling? I think I probably am. Let's get down to business.

Coktel Vision – the team behind Ween – have a slightly chequered past if previous Gamer reviews are anything to go by (and of course, Gamer reviews are the ONLY thing to go by, as you all know).

Gobliiins was an excellent interactive puzzle-type thing, and we eagerly await the sequel which you should see next month. Their most recent offering Fascination, however, wasn't quite as well received, to say the least. Since I have seen very little of either, it was with an open mind that I opened up the box and inserted "disk 1 into drive A".



This is where the adventure starts, so what are you waiting for?

On doing this I was met almost immediately by a funny looking old man with a beard who, it transpired, was Okrham the master sorcerer, and great-grandfather of Ween, the character you play. Now it was pretty obvious that this guy was a bit agitated about something, as he began to explain...

Ten years ago Okrham was saddened by the change in his understudy Kraal, an excellent sorcerer who had a big future ahead of him – Paul Daniels had been in touch and everything – but he began to realise that far greater power awaited him on the dark side of magic.

Eventually Okrham was forced to banish him from the kingdom of the Blue Rocks, which is where the action takes place, to whatever strange place is reserved for such spooky people. Milton Keynes probably.

Anyway, the boot's on the other foot now: Okrham is very old and his magic is fading. This wouldn't be a problem usually, and he'd be happy to gracefully retire: trouble is, he knows (and don't ask me how) that Kraal is planning to return to the Blue Rocks on the day of the eclipse to fulfill his ambition of ruling the kingdom from whence he was banished.

Since Okrham's powers are weak he will be unable to defend the Blue Rocks from Kraal's evil, so surprise surprise, it's up to you, as Ween, to do the decent thing.

The eclipse is only three days away and the one hope you have of defeating Kraal lies in the power of the Revuss, or magical hourglass. According to some prophecy or other, all evil will be banished from the Blue Rocks only when the Revuss is furnished with three grains of sand.

To manage this you'll have to overcome three major obstacles, being rewarded with a single grain of sand for every success. Luckily and somewhat predictably, the Revuss lies deep in a hidden temple, the entrance to which can be found in Okrham's house. It's a point-and-click, pick-'em-up-and-use-'em adventure, viewed from the eyes of Ween, or you. Several strange inhabitants of the Blue Rocks will show their faces from time to time to either help or hinder you.

Most helpful of these is Urm the fruitbat, who will perfrom certain tasks for you in return for a snack. Petroy is a friend of Okrham's and frequently communicates telepathically, deciphering ancient text and other such things you might expect of a wise old man with psychic powers.

There are certainly plenty of puzzles and obstacles in Ween – not all of them logical – and the screens are detailed enough, it's true. Unfortunately the colours are very monotonous and in certain instances you could be forgiven for believing that you were using a monochrome monitor.

Sound is in the form of a very forbidding, Omen-like tune that I think enhances the game by providing an atmosphere which the graphics lack. There appears to be a fair bit of depth to Ween, and despite my gripes I enjoyed playing it very much.

As I mentioned at the start, there are oodles of RPGs on the market, and although Ween is not a poor relation by any means, it doesn't exactly stand head and shoulders above the rest either.

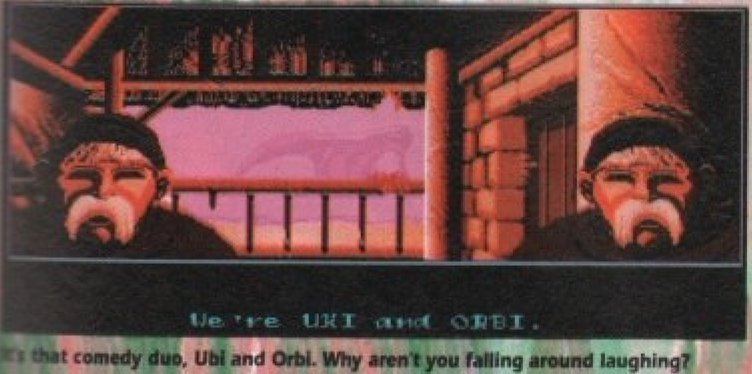
If you're an adventurer with a cupboard full of RPGs then Ween is worth a try because it's a good adventure – but those looking for their first game in this genre could very well be dissapointed by the way in which Ween is presented.

Unfair perhaps, but a fact of life.

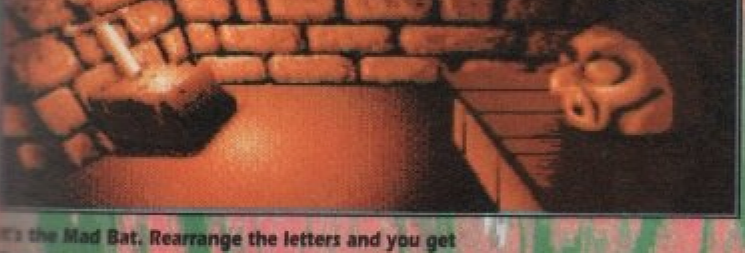
Paul



Waaahhh, what in the name of Bob Holness is that?



It's that comedy duo, Ubi and Orbi. Why aren't you falling around laughing?



It's the Mad Bat. Rearrange the letters and you get Damtab, err I think that went wrong somewhere...



Skeletons are great fun – look I can use his bones and the cauldron to make some soup!



A simple caption. A frog and a couple of Strawberries...

VISION – 3/5
Nicely drawn but needs a bit of ooomph

AUDIO – 3/5
A dark tune of foreboding that complements the game well.

PLAYABILITY – 4/5
Great, but some of the items are a rather fiddly to click on

ADDICTION – 3/5
If you like the graphics you'll like the game

78%



Looks a bit ominous – think I'll give it a miss for now



Stone me grandad, you're rock hard. Never mind – I'll talk to the tree instead

Talking trees and wrinkled men

FABLES AND FIENDS: THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA

VIRGIN ▪ £29.99 ▪ 1 meg ▪ Mouse ▪ Out now

Hello, good evening and welcome to clichéd Introductions, part one. Are you ready? Then I'll begin...

Once upon a time far, far away in RPG land, there existed the kingdom of Kyrandia – a green and pleasant place, full of beautiful trees and flowers, and inhabited by happy people who loved each other and were always doing some good deed or other Creeps.

The ruler of this land was King William, a noble and just man who cared for his people and was respected by them.

Kyrandia derived its beauty from the Kyragem, a powerful gemstone whose magical spell held sway over the territory it protected. While the magic of the Kyragem prevailed, no harm could come to Kyrandia.

Right, that's the sickly bit over with, so where did it all go wrong (it had to do really didn't it?

During his reign, William had cause to order the imprisonment of Malcolm, the evil jester, for murdering the parents of Brandon (that's you).

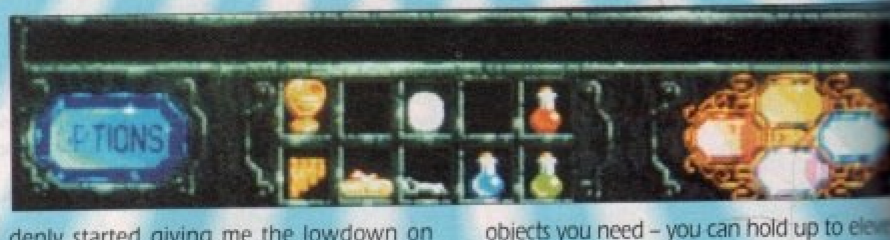
Now I'm sure you've guessed the next bit, but I'll tell you anyway just in case – Malcolm has escaped incarceration and stolen the Kyragem, placing Kyrandia under an evil spell whereby the beauty has been replaced by a withered, desolate and barren landscape.

On a visit to his Grandad Kallak, who just happens to live in a tree, Brandon arrives only to find that to his horror Kallak will today be even less interesting company than old mean usually are, due largely to the fact that he's been turned to stone. This is where the adventure begins, as rather surprisingly the tree in which Kallak lives suddenly begins telling Brandon of the evil that is afoot, and urges him to restore the Kyragem to its rightful place and avenge the death of his parents, by destroying the colourfully dressed doommonger, Malcolm.



Oh lawks, I'm lost. My whole world is caving in around me

Speaking from a personal point of view, if anyone killed my parents broke out of prison and turned my grandad to stone, I'd be pretty annoyed and might want to do something about it. But if a tree suddenly started giving me the lowdown on exactly who the culprit was and how to get revenge, chances are I would check into my local sanitarium, condemning myself indefinitely to a life of eating soft foods and wearing shoes without laces.



But not Brandon. Brandon keeps his cool, listens attentively to the tree and promptly sets off on his dangerous mission. Git.

On leaving the treehouse and venturing into the forest, Malcolm's work is evident – the grass is brown, the trees dead and there's not an animal to be seen anywhere – not even a Leeds United fan.

Now it's a case of collecting whatever objects you need – you can hold up to eleve[n] – and blagging the required information t[o] take you closer to your ultimate confrontatio[n] with the Roy Walker of the underworld.

Spell casting is kept to a minimum i[n] Kyrandia – much more important is Brandon['s] interaction with the characters, animals an[d] inanimate objects he comes across.

Something can be gleaned from near[ly] every screen, be it information from Bryn, the mysterious and strange temple dweller, or the odd teardrop from the pool of sorrow.

The game is divided into four so-calle[d] chapters – that's levels to you and me. You begin, as mentioned, in the forest, and co[…]



Yeah, OK it's an altar. So where's the booze?

tinue through on the second chapter, trekking through the labyrinth of caves before winding up among the trees again for the grand finale.

A great deal of thought seems to have gone into every aspect of Kyrandia. Remember in last month's issue I was impressed by the characters in Rome AD92 and the way they not only provided information but came out with some funny off-the-wall comments too?.

GAMER GOLD

Well there's plenty enough of this kind of thing in Kyrandia, in fact considering Brandon is an orphan with a stone grandad to contend with, he's quite a funny guy.

Not only must you dash about hither and yon all over the show collecting artefacts and gossip, but also endow yourself with the special powers necessary to complete the game.

There are four – the power of healing is important quite early on, but as for the other four... well, I promised not to give too much away.

The animation is absolutely superb. Every screen is full to busting with detail and colour, and the way in which the characters move enhances things 100 per cent. I know it's not particularly new, but I'm a big fan of the... um, "graduating sprite" for want of a better term.

You know what I mean, your character is walking away, getting smaller and smaller until he's nothing but a dot in the distance. Don't yawn damnit!

All through writing this I've been struggling with my conscience, but it's no good – I can't lie to you! I don't know what the sound's like. There, I've said it. It's true, and I'm sorry, but I saw this game at Virgin Mansions in London, and there was no sound on the version that I played.

I did ask the opinion of Richard Branson, who'd just made me a brew and was proceeding to clean my shoes at the time. Said Richard: "It's better than dropping acid and listening to Cliff Richard records played backwards."

I won't vouch for that (not because I haven't tried it, but because he didn't pay me enough), but I will say that if the sound is half as good as the vision, then it's damn good indeed.

Developers Westwood Studios are eager to point out that their product contains absolutely no violence. Apparently in the USA, where Kyrandia has been available for some time, it has attracted many women gamers who have been drawn to its "gentle" element.

But blokes, don't be fooled into thinking this is one for woofters – it's as good a game as you're likely to come across this year – and besides, who needs blood and guts when there's this much going on already?

Kyrandia is the first release in the Fables and Fiends series by Westwood. It's only just hit the shops, but I'm already looking forward to the next one.

Paul

VISION

GGGGG

Best graphics I've seen since last time I saw some very good ones

AUDIO

?????

Ah. Tricky one this. Colour in your own decision when you've heard it

PLAYABILITY

GGGGG

More fun than throwing stones at the neighbour's cat.

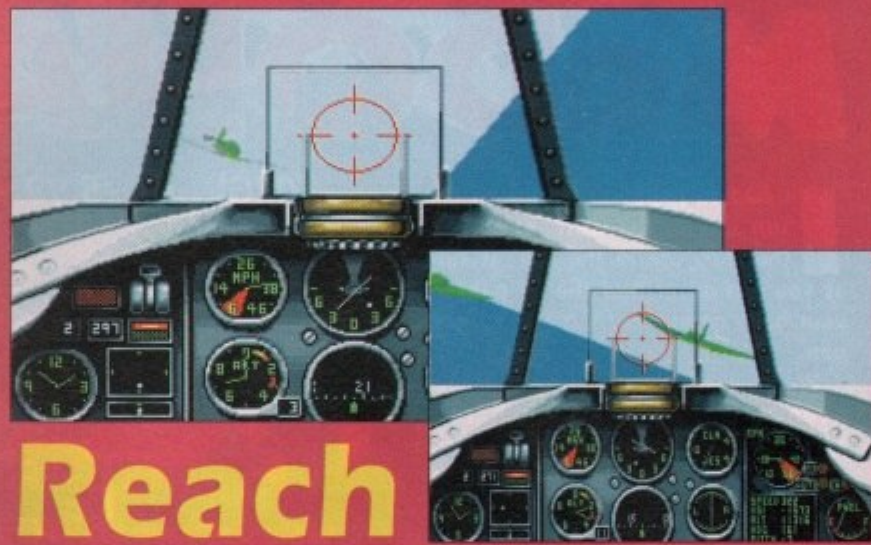
ADDICTION

GGGG

I'm thick as owt me, but I can happily report that I loved it!

90%

the **source**



Reach for the Skies

Just how many flight sims can a person take? If Reach is as good as the hype suggests, I'm sure we'll find room for just one more

A dark shape emerges from the clouds and all conversation in the hangar ceases as the static from the loudspeakers threatens momentarily to drown out the roar of the enemy planes...

"Bandits approaching! Bandits approaching! Scramble! Man your stations! This is not a drill! Repeat – this is not a drill!"

Coo, let's find out more. Reach for the Skies is a flight sim based around the jerry shooting action of the Battle of Britain. Designed and written by flight sim supremo Rod Hyde, Reach promises to be a



massive hit with all fans of the genre.

A big plus as far as I'm concerned is the ease with which you can enter the whole affair. Boot it up and simply choose to fly as a good old boy of the RAF (silly callsigns optional), or as a Luftwaffe nasty intent on kicking some British bottom and faced with the not inconsiderable task of altering the whole outcome of the war.

At the time of writing, the sound and explosions are still a trifle weedy, and the control's



just a bit wobbly, but Rod assures us (and we believe him because he's got an honest face) that these will be tweaked and beefed up on the finished version.

As a simulation it's just about as accurate as they come – there's a real feeling of speed even on a standard machine, and the added smoothness on an accelerated model is brilliant. For the real sky hogs among you, even greater speed can be achieved by sacrificing a little detail.

The Gamer flight sim dept assure us that the external scrolling is top notch clobber, and that the options and touches, such as shooting bits off the enemy planes, bode well for one of the best flight sims for yonks.

Paul



Would you like fries with that?

McDONALD LAND

VIRGIN ▪ £25.99 ▪ ½ meg ▪ Joystick ▪ Out now

It had to happen. As sure as the sun sets in the west, as sure as the stars are in the sky, as sure as you can never find the TV page in your daily newspaper – it had to happen.

We've eaten their burgers, we've been patronised by their bored, spotty teenage staff, and we've written letters to their complaints department And now, God help us all... we can play the computer game.

If you haven't heard of McDonalds then you're dead. I'd lay odds that there's not one person reading this review who hasn't at one time or another sampled the delights offered by these emporia of healthy eating.

There will be very few parents who haven't been dragged down the high street by their screaming offspring who genuinely believe that their world will come to an end without the intervention of a Ronald McDonald Happy Meal.

Get your wallets out mums and dads – this one's for the kids. Virgin tell me the game is aimed at pre-high school kids aged between about five and ten (the ones who are old enough to know what they want but still young and shameless enough to damn well cry their heads off until they get it).

It's a platformer as you'd expect, with the intrepid gamester taking the part of Mick or Mack, two of Ronald's young chummies.

The Hamburglar – he's the fat one with the stripy sweater on the adverts – has run off with Ronald's magic bag. Ronald has really only got himself to blame however, since he was showing off with said bag at one of the many picnics such an ambassador as he must attend.

Although not mentioned in the story, we in the Gamer office believe the importance of the bag lies in it's power to transform a dead dog's tongue into a "100 per cent hamburger in a sesame seed bun". But don't quote us on that.



Erm... now he is on a block. The block is in the sky. Yes

Ronald's got a heavy schedule, so he enlists the help of daring duo Mick and Mack in his quest to recapture his pilfered satchel, insisting for no obvious reason that they gather all the puzzle cards he so carelessly scattered around the various levels as they go.

The levels then – there are seven in all, each watched over by a different one of Ronald's bizarre friends, and each containing about half a dozen sub-levels, making around 40 in total, plus the odd bonus level here and there.

The idea is to avoid the cute little nasties and generally bounce and jump your way to the end of the level, your pockets bulging with the all-important puzzle cards.

There's a theme to each one too – for example "Birdies Treehouse" is, as one might imagine, set up in the trees, with clouds and other sky-like objects providing added obstacles.

Other goodies that need collecting are the (in)famous golden arches, McDonalds' trademark – these suspend in mid-air and if memory serves me correctly provide bonus points at the end of the level.

A nice touch is the way in which Mick – or is it Mack? – can run upside down on certain platforms as long he's going fast enough, and another is the slow motion effect the gravityless moon level provides.



This nifty little map lets you begin wherever you like. Sadly, the location of the loo isn't plotted, so don't sample the food

The puzzles are quite simple and the colours bright and childish in order to appeal to the younger market, but the platform action suffers a little from the much of a muchness stigma. Where McDonald's Land should really win the hearts of kids – and the pockets of their dads – is in its versatility.

For starters there is a two-player option, whereby Mick and Mack operate not in a competitive way, but join forces to foil the evil Hamburglar together (aaahh).

At the beginning of the first level, a simplified map shows the various levels within Ronald's Clubhouse. Using the joystick you can guide your geezer to whichever level you want to tackle first.

Once the first main level has been completed, you are given the choice again with level two.

But that's not all – oh no. When you are on a subsequent level, not only are you given the choice of attempting any sub-level therein (now read this carefully because it gets a bit muddled) but can travel back, using the map, through any of the levels you have already completed.

So for example when on the last level, you can choose between about 40 places as to where you want to go. Well I think it's good, anyway.

Now be warned – don't buy this game if you're looking for an innovative challenge, it's just not for you. But for those of you whose kids run around the house all Christmas upsetting aunty Beryl and knocking over everyone's beer, get your hands on this and it'll keep the buggers quiet for a good few days.

Paul

VISION GGGG
Clear, bright colours galore.

AUDIO GGG
Cute tunes, nice enough FX.

PLAYABILITY GGGG
It's aimed at the kids so it's simple.

ADDICTION GG
This is my opinion, but it's not exactly aimed at 22-year-olds, is it?

81%



Springboards eh? That's a startling new concept. Not

Scary upside-down zone. Try it at home kids



Wigg

Just a li

Hey, it's getting nea Christmas again, high time to beg for some really good presents – and what could be

Cheetah 125+

I remember when this joystick came out. At that time I still owned a Spectrum and the Quick Shot II was the best, even if it was as brittle as an icicle. And what a winner it is – everything a classic should be, boring, unadventurous and above all reliable. Yes it won't fall to bits even if I play decathlon on it.

The Cheetah 125+ is nothing spectacular, with bog standard ergonomic grip and the usual fire buttons. Like all today's kit it uses micro switches instead of the old terminal switches, which in all honesty were usually knackered in about three days.

It performs admirably when used on racing games and the like because it is not too sloppy – it was invaluable on Stunt Car Racer when Biff insisted on beating me. The major down point is its stiffness. It isn't so fast, and you don't get that satisfying click sound when you move it.

The auto fire is suitably placed between the front two fire buttons – unlike a lot of the competitors who try to put them in the most awkward place possible – and there's no danger of you flicking it on by accident

RESPONSE

APPEARANCE

FEEL

OVERALL





Crystal Turbo Clear – Powerplay

This joystick made by Powerplay is similar in style and feel to the Cruiser and the Zipstick, although the shaft on this joystick is completely different to the ones mentioned previously.

It is in fact moulded to fit your hand better than other joysticks and it gives you quite a firm grip which is very handy if you're playing a driving game like Lotus Turbo Challenge III. The unique feature on this stick is that it is completely clear, so that means you can actually see how a joystick works, how very interesting – not!



Cheetah Mach I

Another early Cheetah joystick, this one came out a little later than the 125+, but in my opinion the 125+ had a far superior design.

It's biggest let-down is the ergonomic grip, which is slightly less detailed than usual and the shaft leans forward at a 20 degree angle which feels comfortable at first but gives you wrist ache in the long term.

Biff and I gave it a good seeing to on Cybernetix when it proved very responsive, but it was a little too light on car driving games – you couldn't get it to hold nice and steady on the bends.

And they've done it again, they've put the microswitch at the back of the base in the middle where you are likely to switch it on by accident.

My only real beef is with the fire buttons. They are so heavy you have to exert a good amount of pressure to move them – the last thing you need when playing Project X unless you want your finger to fall off very quickly.

This is not the joystick I would choose personally, but no doubt some people would swear by it.

RESPONSE

APPEARANCE

FEEL

OVERALL





Competition Pro – Powerplay

Ahh, it's my old friend the Competition Pro – I remember the days when I used one to play Spectrum games with it, it's that old. In fact my little brother still uses it for playing Kick Off 2. It is a pretty simple device, for instance it hasn't even got an auto-fire, so you can't cheat on shoot-'em ups.

The latest Competition Pros now have microswitches, which make the joystick twice as good as it was. It is very similar to the Zipstick, but tends to fit into your hands rather better.

You won't attract members of the opposite sex with this particular joystick due to its rather boring black and red colours, but you can get luminous green and pink versions. While I'm on the subject of colour, I personally would like to see some other joysticks brightened up – most of them are either very drab or boringly black.

Verdict? The Competition Pro is a classic joystick and a lot of games players would not swap it for anything.

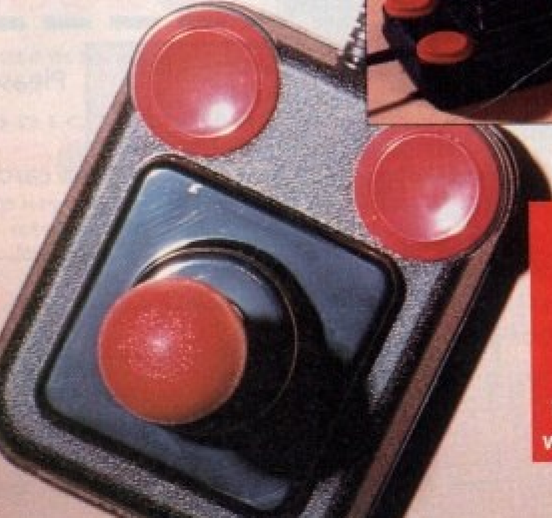
RESPONSE

APPEARANCE

FEEL

OVERALL



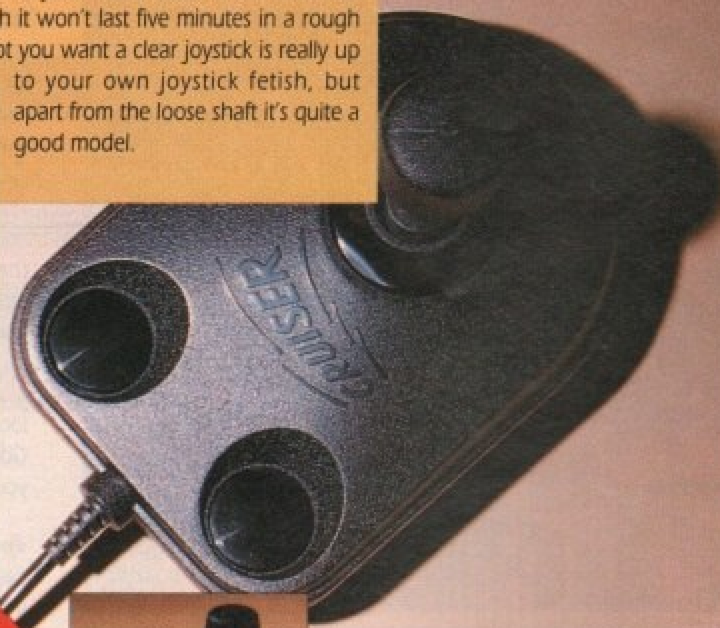


Joysticks kindly provided by:
Powerplay
0457 876601
Cheetah
0222 867777
Ta very much – can we have some more?

To be honest all this see through business is a bit of con, all the joystick manufacturer is trying to do is show you something different so you'll put your hand in your pocket and spend some hard-earned wonga.

The really bad thing about the Crystal Turbo Clear is the shaft. It's really loose and it looks as though it won't last five minutes in a rough session of Kick Off. Whether or not you want a clear joystick is really up to your own joystick fetish, but apart from the loose shaft it's quite a good model.

RESPONSE
APPEARANCE
FEEL
OVERALL



Cruiser – Powerplay

This joystick brings a fair few tears to my eyes because it has only just broken down after four years. Yes, a long and happy relationship cut short by a terrible misunderstanding.

Okay, so I did throw it on the floor and jump on it, but when your little pipsqueak of a brother beats, nay thrashes, you at Sensible Soccer then it's time for a change of joystick. So I ritually destroyed it, just like Nirvana do with their equipment. Oh boy, did I regret it!

Well, enough of my misery, what about the Cruiser? Well it's one of those that you either love to bits (more terrible memories) or hate to death.

There are two models, one like mine, green with a pink shaft and yellow fire buttons, or an all black one. It boasts a unique control – by twisting the pink shaft you can make the joystick's action vary from loose to stiff. This is ideal, because you can adjust it to suit the game you're playing.

The Cruiser does feel very bulky, but you do get used to it after a while. Yep, I'd recommend it to anyone.

RESPONSE
APPEARANCE
FEEL
OVERALL



...le it, ...tle bit...

better than a brand spanking new joystick. Biff and Ben the Gamer men round up their favourites...





Cheetah Stare Probe

What a monster! This really is a refugee from the arcades of the '70s, chunky beyond chunkiness, just how a joystick should be. Everything about this stick is old, even the plastic feels that way, yet despite this it's a pleasure to use.

It's fully microswitched and you get all the nice clicks in use. The shaft itself is very heavy, so even on car sims you can still hold the stick steady, yet it's still a corker for shoot-'em ups.

There's your average ergonomic grip again but the fire buttons are massive so you can't miss. The autofire is in the same place as the 125+, in the middle of the two fire buttons on the base.

This is probably the best all-rounder I have used out of the Cheetah range, and it certainly looks the most durable. I wouldn't pick a fight with it in the pub.

RESPONSE
APPEARANCE
FEEL
OVERALL





Zipstick – Powerplay

Ask almost any games reviewer which joystick they prefer and eight out of ten will say that they go for the Zipstick. The reason is probably because of its simple design. There's nothing fancy to get in the way of those furious joystick thrashing moments. It has a nice black and yellow design and is fully micro switched.

The only major gripe is the positioning of the auto-fire switch, which tends to turn itself on without you knowing – until it's too late. For instance, imagine you're playing Kick Off 2 and it's 2 – 2 with 30 seconds to go and you accidentally switch the auto-fire on.

Quick as a flash your man slides in the area and crops one of the opposition, so it's a penalty and your smiling opponent slams the ball into the back of the net. All of a sudden you get an uncontrollable urge to chuck the joystick across the room and watch it explode into tiny bits.

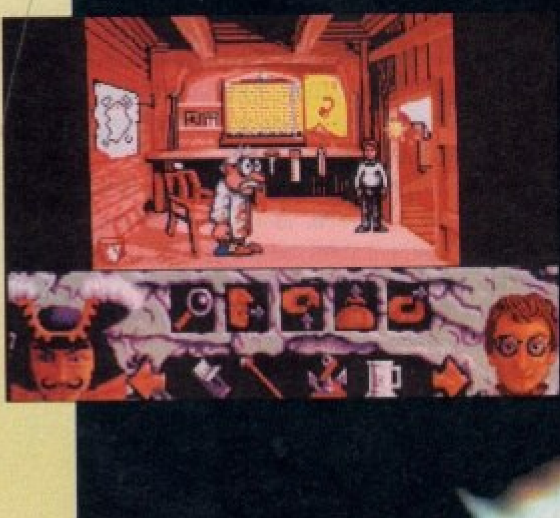
However, apart from that minor gripe the Zipstick is indeed one of the best joysticks available.

RESPONSE
APPEARANCE
FEEL
OVERALL

cheat mode

We do try here at Gamer. This month's super cheat is the new solution to Ocean's Hook. We have had numerous requests for this solution because the game gets a bit surreal as well as very complicated toward the end







1 Go from where you start in Pirate Square down Muggers alley and find Dr Chop. Take the roller blind and ask the doctor how to get some clothes and how to earn some money. Let the Dr do his magic and pull out two of your teeth.

2 Go to Jolliest Roger's place. Ask the manager about hook, the war and how to get the hat, then leave. Walk behind Pirate Square to where Mrs Smeedle keeps her washing.

3 Grab the pole and the anchor and take a look at the jacket then return to the square. Go to the pier and pick up the rope which you should then use on the anchor.

4 Go to the Crossed Swords and take the two cups. Go upstairs to the balcony overlooking the square. Use the rope and the anchor on the clock to swing across the square, and grab the pirate's hat as you go.

5 Knock on Mrs Smeedle's door then quickly swing back to the balcony again. Go downstairs and make your way as quickly as possible to Mrs Smeedle's washing line. Use the washing line to get the jacket and examine it to find a coin.

6 Return to Jolliest Roger's and talk to Fake Jake – ask him if he needs a drink. Give three mugs and the three coins to the bartender, then give the three foaming mugs to Jake.

7 When Jake falls asleep, steal his trousers and make your way to Mrs Smeedle's again, using the roller blind so that no-one can see you when you change.

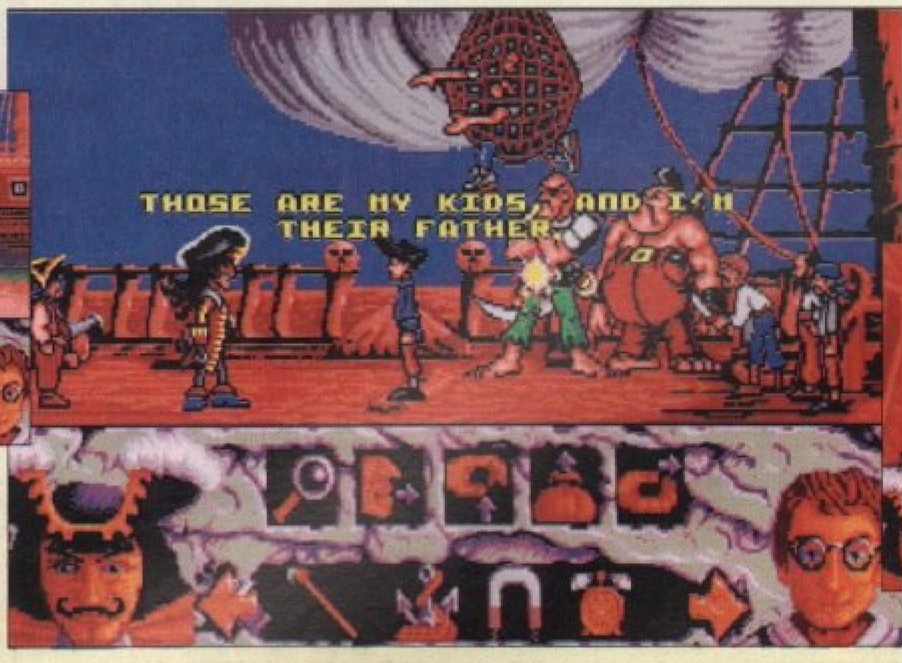
8 Go to Hook's ship and look in the pots to the right to get some money. Now go back to the tailor in town. Ask her for a metal detector and give her the money in return for a magnet.

9 Go to the beach and use the magnet on the "X". Make your way back round to the ship and seek out hook.

10 Take a look at the pulley base and then the big shell, then use the pole on the ropes. Now use the shell to haul yourself up to the look-out point.

11 Walk right to enter the Neverforest. This is a maze – go right, right, right then go







up, right, up, left, left, left, left then up right, right, right.

12 After your entrapment, enter the tree. Go to the round pond and have a chat to Tinkerbell about everything. Go the sling shot and chat to ace about everything. Go to the workshop and take the arrow.

14 Go to the jogging area and use the exercise equipment three time to work off the flab. Go to the avenger and take and examine the net.

15 Go to the four seasons and take the dead wood – use it with the string. Take the flower go to the chicken and use the Conchshell.

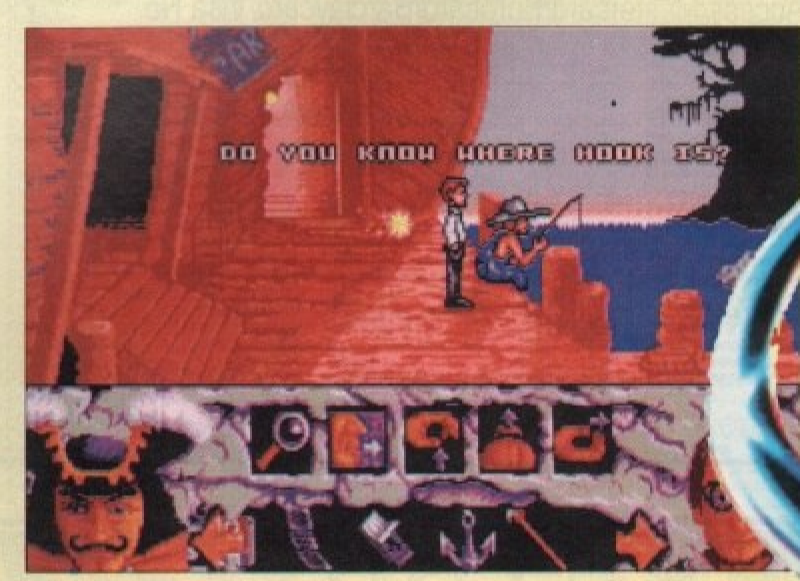
16 Steal the eggs and return to the Workshop and give the eggs to the boy. Go back to the round pond and give the flower to Tinkerbell, take the branch from the tree.

17 Go back to the sling shot and use the strong elastic on the broken strap. Use the branch with the string. Return to the workshop and use the bow with the pan pipes.

18 Take the pipes. Go to the cliff-side and use yourself on the far corner of the fence. Repeat this three times then ask Thudbutt what he thought about that.

19 Go back to the sling shot and use it on yourself. Ask Thudbutt what his happy thoughts are, go to the dining area and talk to Rufio.

20 Say "On Rufio!". Go to the round pond and walk to the middle on the screen to get inside the Nevertree. Talk to Tinkerbell then examine the bed, the chair and the fireplace.



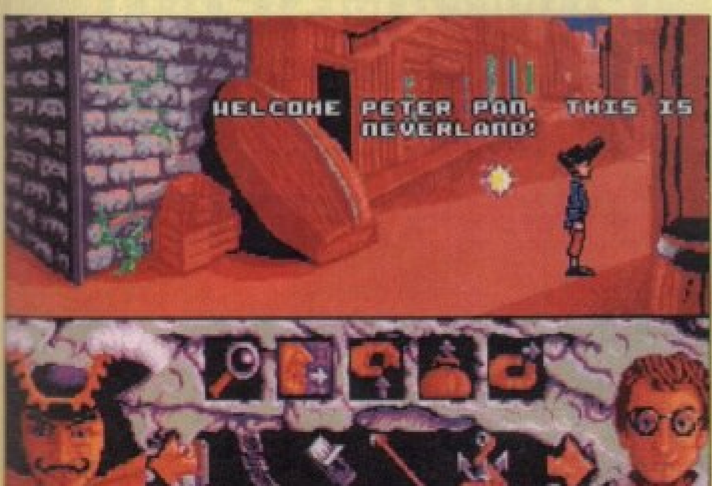




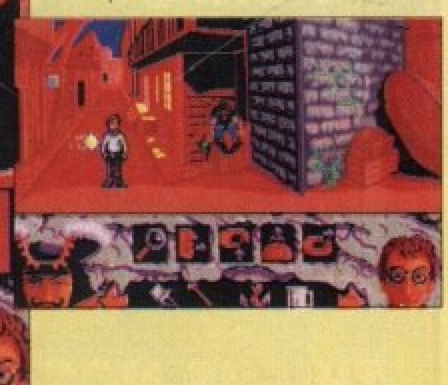
21 Talk to Tinkerbell again to regain your memories. Having discovered that you are Peter Pan, it's time to defeat Hook. When the sword fight starts use these taunts in the following order:

"Peter Pan the Avenger!"
"Good form James"
"Tick tock tick tock Hook's afraid of the dead old Crock."
"You kidnapped my kids Hook you deserve to die"
"Put swords it's Hook or me this time"
"Peter pan the Avenger"

after which you should have finished.







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Intuition

Alex Gian shows how to design attractive and practical front-ends for our ARexx applications

Before we begin, there are a few comments on Intuition programming that should be kept in mind. Intuition, the Amiga's Graphic User Interface, consists of a collection of routines which reside in ROM. These routines are used to create the typical Amiga windows, menus, gadgets and so on that give the Amiga its distinctive look and feel.

They are available to anyone, provided their language can access them. Because of the Amiga's design and history, it is assumed most programmers will be using C or assembler, but Intuition can be just as easily be accessed from Basic, Pascal, Modula and so on.

We ought to make it clear though, that just about all good documentation on the workings of Intuition is described with examples in C. This means that if you want to understand them you must have at least a reading knowledge of C.

On the other hand, if you are planning to do any Amiga programming at all, it certainly won't hurt you to understand the basics of C.

A good read

The best book on Intuition is probably the *CBM Amiga ROM Kernel Manual* (Libraries), which now covers Workbench 2.0. There are other good books too, but they probably do not cover Workbench 2.0 yet, so check what you buy!

We should also mention *Amiga C Encyclopaedia* by Anders Bjerin of the Amiga C Club. The first four disks of this excellent PD 12-disk set have a very good explanation of Intuition. System structure browsing utilities like SBrowser, Xoper, and ARTM will also be very useful, and can be obtained from PD libraries.

However, back to our subject, which is programming Intuition from ARexx. There are certain distinct advantages to this. Firstly, it is much easier to do interactive work, and make changes fast, since there is no need to compile, assemble, link and so on. There are also far fewer initialisations to be made, and hence less code to confuse things.

The library we are going to use is Ronnie Kelly's APIG.library, which, despite its name, is actually quite good. APIG stands for ARexx Programmers' Intuition and Graphics library, and this is exactly what this library does – it makes most Intuition and Graphics calls (as well as some of the Exec list functions) directly accessible from within ARexx.

The version of APIG used is 1.1 and is available on Fish disk 559, with many excellent examples, although a copy should be on the CoverDisk. Alternatively an updated version (3.3) is available on Fish disk 634. I have found APIG.library, along with rxgen.library, to be quite sufficient for any programming job.

Of course, for mathematical calculations I assume that everybody is using WGL's rexxmathlib.library, which was also included on the CoverDisk a while back.

Dispatched

The way that APIG works is fairly typical of many ARexx utilities that support Intuition. Essentially, any IDCMP events (mouse clicks etc) occurring at any particular window are "translated" to ARexx messages containing the same information. These messages are then dispatched to an appropriate port for processing. In most such utilities, including APIG, the port must first be specified by the user.

For those a bit more familiar with the Amiga system, here is what happens. Any windows you open with APIG are themselves separate tasks, and even have their own ARexx port, called apig.task.1, apig.task.2, etc. These "window" tasks intercept the IDCMP events, convert them to ARexx messages (*RexxMsgs* in C) and dispatch them to the specified port. An Arexx message has several fields, and their full description can be found in the documentation.

The port apig.task.*n* accepts only one ARexx command, 'DIE'. If it receives this command, it will close the window, and deallocate all the resources used. This can be useful if your ARexx program hangs, leaving unwanted windows open.

Our program

Here is a brief description of our program, APIG_test.rexx, shown in Listing I. You should also find it on the CoverDisk, to save you typing it in. You can run it by typing **rx APIG_test** at your shell window. When you are finished, clicking on the close gadget will shut everything down. You do not need to understand the program to run it.

Now, inevitably in describing this program, we are going to have to make some detours away from pure ARexx into the workings of Intuition in general and APIG.library in particular.

We stress once again that if you are a beginner,

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programming

you should take some time to study at least the basics of Intuition. The description of the program assumes at least some familiarity with Intuition.

I think that this type of programming will be most useful to those who want to do some "quick and dirty" Intuition work, perhaps to try out an idea interactively, without having to drag out the C compiler.

The first section of the program does some initialisations. First, it opens a port – this is essential to APIG – and then calls a function which creates a whole lot of global variables. These variables are mainly flags, as defined in the system's C header files.

This is very convenient, since most programmers already know the flag names, and they are much easier to remember than their numeric equivalents.

The flag names are still in their old 1.3 form, for example WINDOWCLOSE rather than v2.0's WFLG_CLOSEGADGET, but this should be no great problem, since the actual value (8) is unchanged.

We then open our window by calling the OpenWindow() function with all the required parameters. The parameters are very similar (though not exactly the same) as the Intuition library call.

Note that when the arguments are null pointers, ie '0000 0000'x, can be left out altogether, provided the comma separators are in place.

APIG assumes that you know what you are doing, and incorrect parameters are practically guaranteed to crash the machine.

You should also remember that if a line is too long in ARexx and you want to split it on to two lines, they should be separated by a comma. APIG has quite a lot of potentially long lines, and if you are not careful you will get a "wrong number of arguments" error. For example:

```
var=func(longname,longername,etc)
```

is the same as:

```
var=func(longname ,
         , longername,etc)
```

Next we create our gadgets. Notice the "link" argument in each function (refer to the APIG docs), which links the gadget to the one before it. This creates a LIST of gadgets, just like Intuition wants it.

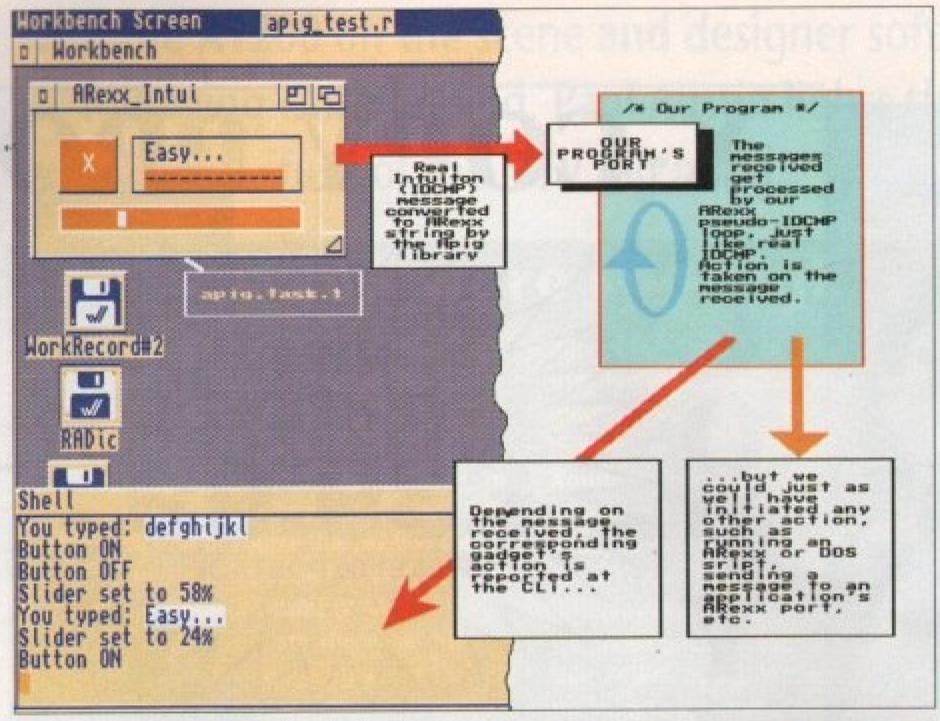


Figure 1

We then add the list of gadgets to our window, and refresh it so that everything appears as it should. The APIG functions used to do this are exact equivalents of their Intuition counterparts.

Remember that Intuition's refreshing system is not as smart as it could be, and the toggled Boolean gadget will do weird things on occasion, especially if the window has been resized. This is not a fault of the program, but a weakness in the Intuition refresh routine.

The standard way to implement a gadget with alternate images is by using the GADGHIMAGE flag and pointers to image structures. Any good reference text on Intuition will explain this.

The string gadget is quite straightforward. Note the 648 argument in the proportional gadget. This is so that our slider will have 101 positions rather than just 100 (65535/648).

Once the gadgets are all set up we enter the loop where we wait for messages at our program's port. We have dealt with this at length in the past and will not repeat it here. Our program uses the standard method – see the November 92 *Amiga Computing* for full details of receiving ARexx messages at ports.

Having received the messages, we can now interpret them. We have used a very simple approach in our program. The flags we have specified for each gadget ensure that the Boolean gadget only sends a message as soon as it is clicked down, while the other two only when they are released. In fact, if the string gadget is selected, according to Intuition convention, it will only send its message once return is pressed.

Therefore for each gadget there is only one case where it will send a message. We can simply check the gadget ID (since there is only one window) or the gadget address. This approach is a bit simplistic, but it works.

Even though our program is perhaps oversimplified, it shows how we can use the Intuition interface to send an ARexx message at the click of a mouse. There may be many cases where this is much more desirable than having to type in the whole lists of instructions.

```
/* APIG_test.rexx */
/* Testing the APIG library Intuition calls */

port_name = 'REC-msgs'
port_addr = OpenPort(portq_name)
CALL Set_APIG_Globals()

W_IDCMP = CLOSEWINDOW + GADGETDOWN + GADGETUP
W_Flags = WINDOWCLOSE + WINDOWDRAG + WINDOWDEPTH +
WINDOWSIZING
OurWindow =
OpenWindow(port_name,40,30,220,65,3,2,W_IDCMP,W_Flag
s,'ARexx_Intui',0,0,,)
CALL WindowLimits(OurWindow,130,15,220,65)

G_Flags = GADGHCOMP
G1_Activ = TOGGLESELECT + GADGIMMEDIATE
G1_T  =  MakeIText(OurWindow,"X",17,6,1,3,0,, )
Gadg1 =
MakeBoolGadget(OurWindow,20,20,40,20,G_Flags,G1_Acti
v,G1_T,1,,,1,)

G2_Activ = RELVERIFY
G2_T  =  MakeIText(OurWindow,"ÑÑÑÑÑÑ
",0,10,1,3,JAM2,,)
Gadg2 =
MakeStrGadget(OurWindow,80,22,100,20,G_Flags,G2_Acti
v,G2_T,1,,,2,Gadg1,12)

G3_Activ = RELVERIFY
P_Flags =  FREEHORIZ + AUTOKNOB
Gadg3 =
MakePropGadget(OurWindow,20,45,170,10,G_Flags,G3_Act
iv,,P_Flags,648,,3,Gadg2,)

CALL AddGlist(OurWindow,gadg1,0,,)
CALL RefreshGadgets(Gadg1,OurWindow,)

X_Button = 0
ExitFlag = 0
DO FOREVER UNTIL ExitFlag = 1
  CALL WAITPKT(port_name)
  msg = GETPKT(port_name)

  IF msg ~= NULL() THEN DO
    class = GETARG(msg,0)
    gid   = GETARG(msg,9)
    x = REPLY(msg,0)
    END

  IF class = CLOSEWINDOW THEN DO
       ExitFlag = 1 ; LEAVE
       END
  IF gid = 1 THEN DO
       X_Button =  ~X_Button
       IF X_Button = 1 THEN SAY 'Button ON'
       IF X_Button = 0 THEN SAY 'Button OFF'
       END
  IF gid = 2 THEN DO
       out = GetValue(GetValue(Gadg2,34,4,P),0,4,S)
       SAY 'You typed:' '9b'x||'42m' || out ||
'9b'x||'0m'
       END
  IF gid = 3 THEN DO
       out = GetValue(GetValue(Gadg3,34,4,P),2,2,N)
* 100
       SAY 'Slider set to' round(out/65535)'%'
       /**/
       END
END

CloseWindow(OurWindow)
ClosePort(port_name)

exit

round:
procedure
x = arg(1)
if x - x%1  < .5 then RETURN x%1
if x - x%1 ~< .5 then RETURN x%1 + 1
```

Listing 1

The AA explosion...

With the A1200 on the scene and designer software following close behind, Paul Austin lights the fuse of the DTV big bang

If you've already perused the A1200's features you'll no doubt be aware that the AA chipset and more precisely the A1200 itself marks a revolution in the home computer market on a par with the release of the Amiga itself way back in 1985.

For the hordes of budget-conscious DTV people. this new machine is like manna from heaven. At the recent Commodore launch even the most cynical Amiga hacks were hard pressed to hold back a smile.

Now before you sign the cheque there are a few points that any would-be Speilberg should consider. First and foremost has to be a hard disk. At the moment the A1200 will be shipped exclusively without a hard disk.

Obviously for any serious use especially with the inevitable increase in file size a hard disk is essential. There are two ways around the problem. First you could take the DIY approach and invest in the IDE hard drive of your choice and then fit it yourself.

Although this may sound like a rather daunting prospect it's really a very simple exercise. The only problem is the immediate invalidation of the guarantee which popping the top off the machine ensures.

Replacement

The second alternative is to have the hard disk fitted by the supplier. Again this invalidates the standard Commodore warrantee but more often than not the larger suppliers offer their own warranty agreements as a replacement.

With this method it can work out slightly more expensive but at least your peace of mind is ensured.

As yet I can't offer any specific details as to which companies will be offering a hard drive option, but it's a near certainty that Power Computing will be leading the field alongside ZCL and Silica.

If you do take the second method please bear in mind that suppliers' warranty agreements are only as good as the company that issues them.

As a result, it's often well worth spending a little more cash with well established companies such as those listed rather than taking a risk with a lesser know company who may well be cutting their margins to the bone in order to offer seemingly spectacular reductions.

Finally we come to the RAM options which again are vital for serious DTV applications. The machine, like the A3000, will offer up to 2Mb of chip RAM.

At present it's still unclear whether the 2Mb will come as standard or whether there will be 1Mb fitted internally with the second added via the trap door. The question is, will Commodore add the expansion at the factory?

On the fast RAM front the future looks equally rosy with up to 4Mb of 32-bit RAM in the CPU slot with an additional 4Mb of 16-bit RAM available via the PCMCIA slot.

Again the option for additional RAM is an important point for DTV and specifically animation. To get the best from the machine's 32-bit architecture, the 4Mb of 32-bit RAM is a must, with the 16-bit RAM being a useful addition but by no means as fast – as we're all too aware when animating speed is everything.

The mention of the CPU slot also raises another interesting point. One of the machines strongest selling points is its built-in up-chippable design – 030s, 040s, the sky's the limit.

AA software spotlight

As some famous person almost certainly once said, "A machine is only as good as its software...". Fortunately for the new breed of Amiga the future looks very good indeed.

At the forefront of the mad scramble to take advantage of the new 256-colour standard display and of course the 262,000 colour Ham8 mode is our old friend DPaint, re-born under the new title of DPaint IV AA.

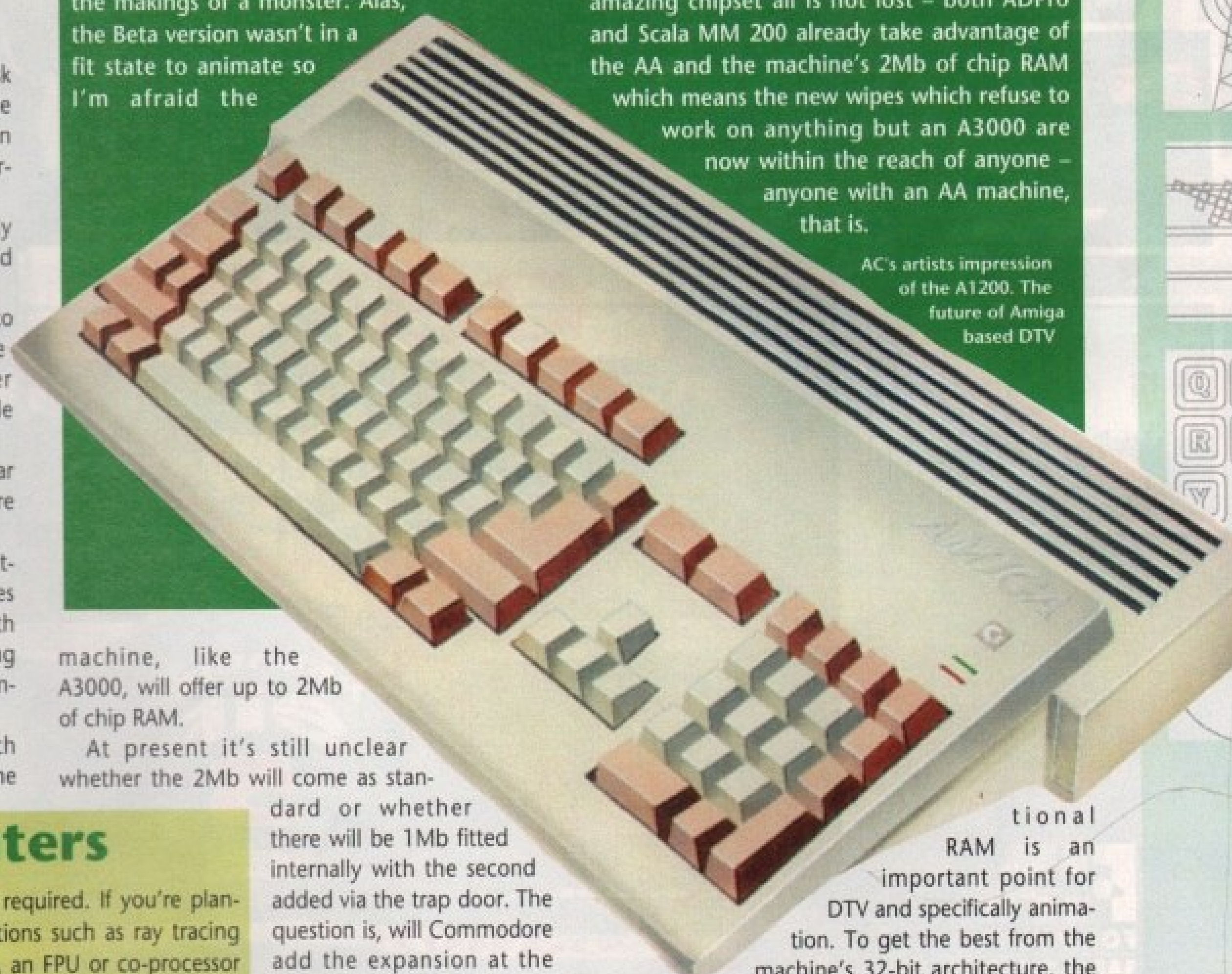
As the name suggests the new release boasts full support for the amazing variety and quality the AA chipset can provide in all screen modes.

Although I've only used a Beta copy at the recent A1200 launch the software already has the makings of a monster. Alas, the Beta version wasn't in a fit state to animate so I'm afraid the agonising question of Ham8 animation speeds may have to remain a mystery for another month at least.

As you may be aware thanks to our American correspondent speeds of 25 FPS interlaced and 50 FPS non-interlaced are already being claimed on the A4000.

Only the release of DPaint IV AA or Brilliance from Digital Creations will answer the speed question on the A1200. Rest assured that *AC* will be the first to bring you the facts the minute either package crosses the pond in a finished form.

If like me you can't wait to apply the power of the new machine and more precisely its amazing chipset all is not lost – both ADPro and Scala MM 200 already take advantage of the AA and the machine's 2Mb of chip RAM which means the new wipes which refuse to work on anything but an A3000 are now within the reach of anyone – anyone with an AA machine, that is.



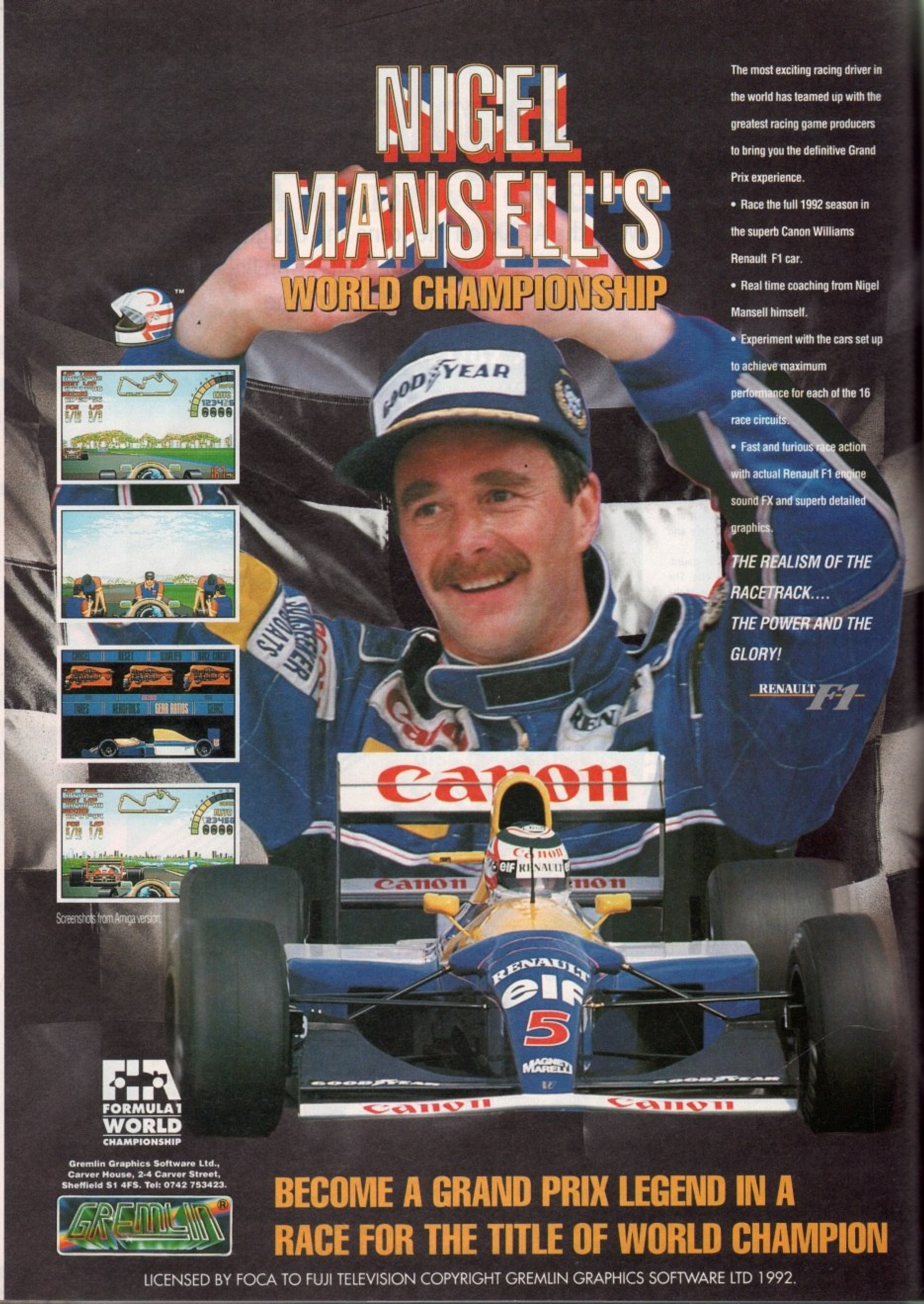
AC's artists impression of the A1200. The future of Amiga based DTV

Co-pro pointers

The optional co-processor is factory fitted as required. If you're planning to employ the A1200 for power applications such as ray tracing and other such number crunching marathons, an FPU or co-processor will save a lot of valuable rendering time.

As mentioned above, the standard machine comes without an FPU and unfortunately there's no option to add one later – if you're thinking about this it must be fitted at the factory.

The FPU itself comes in two forms, either a Motorola 68881 or 68882 with a price point reflecting the difference in speed. Like all the chips within the machine these will almost certainly be surface mounted, again making a future upgrade a difficult if not impossible.



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Designer sprites

Margaret Stanger explains how to use a program like DPaint to produce your own sprites

The picture on an Amiga screen can be in up to three independent layers. The foreground is made up of sprites, small graphic elements 16 pixels wide, two bitplanes deep, and of any height.

The Amiga library routines use a SimpleSprite structure that holds data for each sprite – the height, horizontal and vertical co-ordinates, sprite number and a pointer to a data array in chip memory. This array contains word pairs with the sprite's bitplane data (labouriously typed in).

The two sprites on the CoverDisk were designed using DPaintII. I saved each sprite as a separate brush, taking care to make the brushes 16 pixels wide. The height of the sprite did not matter. I used four colours (two bitplanes) for the brushes, but the first sprite colour will be transparent.

Interpret

DPaintII produces a short IFF (International File Format) file for each brush. The file reader module readsprite.c can read and interpret this file, or a similar file produced by another artist program.

The routine readfile() has been adapted from the general IFF picture file routine that has graced these pages in the past. Sprite bitplane data is only two bytes wide and is not usually compressed, so a routine to decode compressed data has not been included.

A sprite uses one of four sets of four colours. Sprites 0 and 1 have colours 16 to 19; sprites 2 and 3 have colours to 20 - 23; sprites 4 and 5 have colours 24 to 27; sprites 6 and 7 have colours 28 to 31. The height of the offending sprite is returned by this routine:

```
spriteheight = readfile(name,sprdata,viewport,pair)
```

The inputs are :

name	Pointer to the name of the file containing the data
sprdata	Pointer to the chip memory array to hold the sprite bitplane data
viewport-	Pointer to the current ViewPort
pair	0,1,2,3 depending which of four sprite pairs is to be used for the sprite

The output is spriteheight Height of the sprite contained in the file.

The routine will look for the usual chunkheaders in an IFF file. The BMAP chunk will be decoded to give the sprite height; the other data is either known (width and depth) or irrelevant (data from the screen the brush was saved on).

The CMAP contains the colours used, and BODY or ABIT the bitplane data. The calling program allows space for a maximum height of 256 pixels – this may be over-cautious. If the file to be read is missing, (or not an IFF picture ILBM or ACBM file), the routine returns a sprite height of zero, the program will be stable but not attempt to display the missing sprite.

The demo program on the CoverDisc contains two source modules, rsprite.c and spriteread.c, which can be compiled and linked together in the normal way.

Chip memory

The object module, rsprite, opens a Screen, and a Window in that Screen. Each ILBM picture file (DPaintII brush), with the filename specified in the calling program, is opened and the sprite data read into the appropriate array in chip memory.

The colour data in the file determines the sprite's colours. The file is closed, and control goes back to the main program, which updates the sprite height in the SimpleSprite structure.

The sprites are displayed on the screen until the user closes the window, or clicks a mouse button. The sprites are freed, the window and screen closed, and the program exits.

Although I can now design sprites and read them in to a program more quickly, their quality has not improved as much as I had hoped. I still need an artist!

New coders start here

There are several Amiga Libraries, each containing routines for use in your programs. The main libraries used are Exec, DOS, Graphics and Intuition.

Exec library routines handle the multitasking and the lowest level of interaction between the hardware and the software. DOS library routines handle input and output control.

Associated with each library is a special file with extension .fd. These files are usually found on the Extras disk in their own directory.

An '.fd' file contains a list of the routines in the library, together with the input parameters that each routine takes, and the corresponding registers used in assembly language.

Any value returned by a routine will be in register D0, but other registers may have been overwritten, especially A0, A1 and D1.

To access a library routine you must first open the corresponding library. In assembler, when a library is opened, the pointer (or library base) is stored by the program. If a library routine is declared as an external reference (XREF), the linker can calculate its offset from the library base. The linker knows where to find the routine, and can link it to the rest of the program.

The 'OpenLibrary' routine is found in the Exec library, but the Exec library base is always available to us from the same location (_AbsExecBase). Once a library is open, its routines can be called as if they were subroutines or your own machine language routines. For assembly language the correct library base must be in register A6 when one of its routines is called.

The short demo program on the CoverDisk uses five library routines: OpenLibrary() and CloseLibrary() from the Exec library, Delay(), Output() and Write() from the DOS library.

```
OpenLibrary(libName,version)(A1,D0)
```

opens a chosen library.
"libName" is a pointer to the name of the library to be opened.
"version" is the lowest version number required. A pointer to the library base is returned in register D0.

```
CloseLibrary(library)(A1)
```

closes a library.
"library" is a pointer to the library base.

```
Delay(timeout)(D1)
```

waits for a given timeout."timeout"is the time delay required, in milliseconds.

```
Output()
```

finds the file handle for writing text in the current window.
A pointer to the file handle is returned in register D0.

```
Write(file,buffer,length)(D1,D2,D3)
```

will write to a file or a window.
"file" is a pointer to the chosen file handle.
"buffer" is a pointer to the buffer containing the data to be written.
"length" is the number of bytes to be written.

When the object program (intro) is run, the program opens the DOS library. If the library opens successfully, the program displays a short message, delays for a few seconds, closes the library and exits.

Notes for Devpac users

The Devpac Assembler has Macros available for calling Amiga library routines. Using my usual assembler, I would call the Delay routine jsr _LVODelay To call the same routine in the DEVPAC programming environment, use CALLDOS Delay.

The macro CALLDOS would save the contents of register A6, load A6 with the library pointer, call the required DOS Library routine, and restore the original contents of register A6.

It would not be necessary to declare each library routine as an external reference, but the header files exec/exec_lib.i, libraries/dos.i, and libraries/dos_lib.i may need to be included.

Waiting in the wings

Paul Austin spotlights the new machines and begins the search for the missing DSP

After a lot of speculation, and a whole host of rather misleading leaks from countless third-party developers, the format for the new breed of machines has finally hit the streets.

Although both the A4000 and its pint-sized counterpart the A1200 are truly wonderful machines they do lack one feature that casts a rather grey shadow over the earlier launch.

Alas, the long awaited Digital Sound Processor or DSP is obvious only by its absence. In addition there's no built-in Midi ports as widely suggested earlier in the year.

With the average plug-in Midi connector retailing for as little as £20 I can understand why Commodore have sacrificed built-in Midi ports, perhaps in order to save space or alternatively in an attempt keep costs in check.

The missing element I can't understand is the DSP itself. Why, oh why have Commodore let the ailing ST off the hook yet again, when even the Atari top brass are openly admitting the problems with their dying product line.

In defence

To add insult to injury, the bug-ridden Falcon boasts a DSP as standard, so why not the A4000 and A1200?

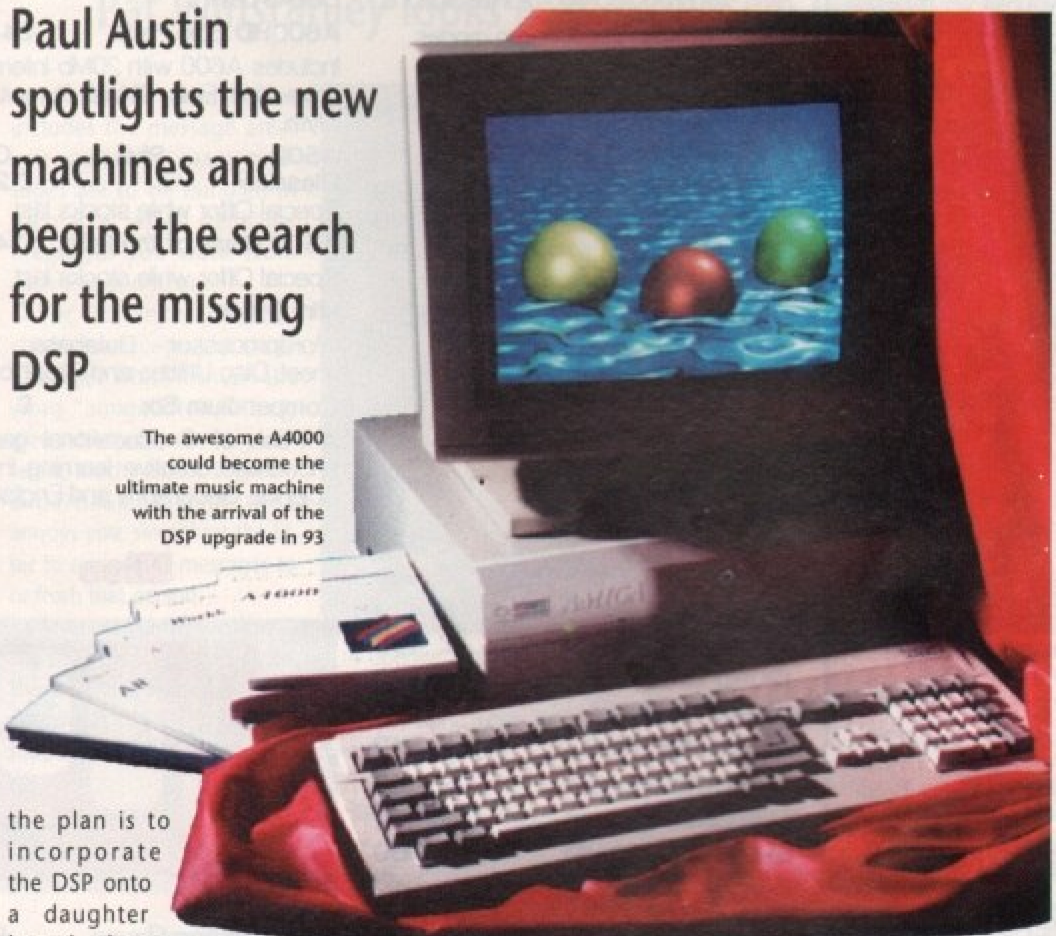
In defence of Commodore the DSP situation isn't quite as bleak as it may first appear. Although neither of the aforementioned machines ship with a DSP at present, plans are afoot.

To clarify the DSP position I spoke to Andrew Ball, the man behind the infamous Commodore press machine. After a fair amount of verbal jousting he finally confirmed that the A4000 will indeed feature a DSP in the future. Unfortunately the time scale for the launch was at best rather sketchy.

Even after my best efforts as an investigative reporter, Mr Ball wouldn't commit himself to a specific date other than to confirm that the upgrade will appear sometime in 93.

The good news is that the addition of a DSP will be an upgrade and won't require replacement of the entire machine. As you may be aware, courtesy of our A4000 feature in last month's issue, the A4000 has been designed to be upchippable.

In other words in theory anything from a 680020 to a 68060 – when they become available – will slip directly into the machine via the CPU daughter board already built-in. Apparently the plan is to incorporate the DSP onto a daughter board alongside a replacement CPU.



The awesome A4000 could become the ultimate music machine with the arrival of the DSP upgrade in 93

As yet it's impossible to state how Commodore will handle daughter board upgrades but it's highly likely that they'll implement a trade in system, so existing users with 040-based A4000s can send their existing boards in exchange for an identical or faster CPU/DSP combination.

Not so rosy

This is all good news for A4000 users but alas the situation for A1200 owners isn't quite so rosy. In short Commodore have no plans to add a DSP option to the A1200 range... end of story.

The reason for this decision is two-fold. As you may be aware, the A1200 like the A4000 is an upchippable machine – due to the machine's limited expandability, implementation of a DSP via the trapdoor CPU slot is a best a tricky business.

Although Commodore themselves have no plans to offer the option, Mr Ball was very careful to mention that the addition of a DSP is by no means impossible and is very likely be taken up by third-party developers sometime in 93.

If the hoped for third-party DSP systems do indeed see the light or day during 93 it adds yet another twist to this already complex tale. As you're probably aware the A1200 is a true 32-bit machine and as a result is only at its best while using 32-bit memory.

In order to do exactly that, even more additions are required to the ever-expanding CPU daughter board. Like the A600, the A1200 can take advantage of PCMCIA cards as a source of additional RAM.

Unfortunately additional PCM RAM is strictly 16 bit, and as a result can't by definition fully exploit the potential of the A1200 is 32-bit architecture and attendant CPU.

To counteract the problem, the daughter board comes to the rescue yet again by allowing the addition of up to 4Mb of 32-bit memory directly onto the board.

32-bit memory

If you're planning to take advantage of the proposed third-party DSP systems if and when they arrive, a certain amount of 32-bit memory may become essential, as any DSP system is very likely to be married with a direct-to-disk recording system. In such situations fast transfer between the CPU, DSP and hard disk is essential.

Even if the proposed DSP releases fail to appear a certain amount of 32-bit RAM is a real advantage no matter what the application.

For example if you plan to employ the A1200 as a platform for power sequencers such as KCS and Bars & Pipes Professional with their accompanying army of add-on modules, and almost limitless selection of windows and screens, additional 32-bit RAM is highly recommended.

This becomes even more important if such software is to be teamed with presentation and titling software to produce a complete multimedia production.

Compatibility across the range

As far as compatibility is concerned it's highly unlikely problems will arise on existing sequencing software, as the majority of the enhancements offered by the AA chipset are dedicated to improving the graphical output of the machine.

If the unspeakable happens and incompatibility does rear its ugly head all is not lost, as both the A4000 and A1200 have a fall-back mode built in to the AA chipset which allows the machine to boot using ECS emulation – a format that's already been tried and tested on the A500 Plus and A600 and should ensure complete compatibility across the range.

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Reading at leisure

Pat Winstanley looks at inexpensive E mailing

There are two methods of keeping down costs when using bulletin boards regularly. One is to invest hard-earned cash in a fast modem while a cheaper method is to invest about half an hour of your time to set up an offline reader.

Reading and replying to messages online both costs you money and also clogs up the board, making other users wait to get through. If you've ever tried dialling in to a popular board in the evening you'll already know how frustrating it can be.

Most sysops encourage the use of offline readers as it allows more people to call in, without having to go to the expense of installing extra phone lines.

So what does an offline reader do? Basically it unpacks and sorts a bundle of messages, presents them to you in whatever order you choose and allows you to make replies or write original messages yourself. These replies are then bundled up again ready to be sent (uploaded) to the BBS.

At the BBS end, the sysop will have set up a "door" where you can choose which messages you want to read, have them bundled up and compressed, then downloaded to your machine for the OLR to work on. If that all sounds terribly complex, don't worry – it's really easy.

This month I've been looking at the Blue Wave Mail Door, and an OLR for use with it, Q-Blue. Each of them takes about ten minutes to set up, one while online at the BBS and the other at home on your Amiga.

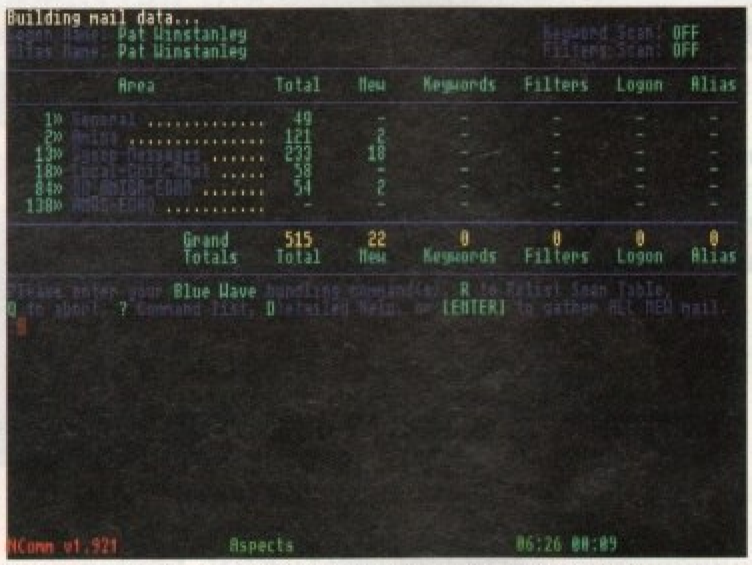
From then on, the only time you will spend online is the time it takes to bundle your new messages, download them, and upload your prepared replies. This also has the advantage of giving you more time to download files, instead of spending it all reading messages.

Important

Looking at the BBS end of things first, somewhere on the main menu there will be options for the various mail doors the board supports.

Once selected you'll be presented with another menu, the most important option of which is configuration. The Blue Wave Mail Door is extremely flexible and allows you to configure things exactly as you like them. This includes the message areas you want, how many messages are to be bundled in each area, which particular messages you want from each area and so on.

For instance you can choose to receive just those messages which contain the word "amiga" from a busy area which covers many different machines. Or if there's a particular person who annoys you, simply set the filter to exclude all messages to or from that person.



Blue Wave messages ready for downloading

Another handy option is the password. This can be set up to operate both at the BBS end and on your machine (with different passwords for each). Thus other people using your machine won't be able to read your message bundles.

Once everything is set to your liking, simply tell the program to bundle up all the messages you want, and download them. Then log-off.

Configuration

Back on your machine you will have a compressed file which you've just downloaded. Now comes another period of configuration to prepare Q- Blue to your liking. First of all you need to make four new directories – downloads, uploads, work and reply.

These can go anywhere you like, but you need to specify the complete pathname to them in the configuration option. You also need access to a text editor of some kind. I use a small Freeware program called Textra, which is in the c: directory, renamed as ed.

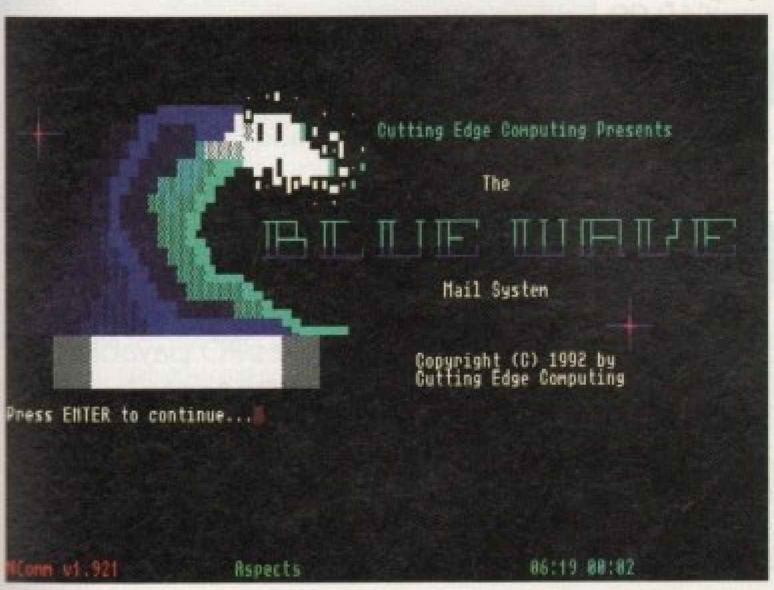
Q-Blue offers several ways of sorting and displaying messages such as by number, age, name and so on. There are also several compression methods to choose from, with the facility to set up others if you wish.

Once everything is set up, and the configuration saved, the next step is to load in the packet of messages you downloaded earlier. Q-Blue then uncompresses the file, a nice touch being that it doesn't simply fall over if you have selected different methods at the two ends, but corrects your mistake for you if it can.

Now you can read all the messages you downloaded in whatever order you choose. Options include hopping from area to area, skipping backwards and forwards, writing new messages, replying to old ones and even saving particular messages to disk.

Messages can be displayed singly, or as a list, and both mouse and keyboard may be used, with some of the common menu options duplicated at the bottom of the screen for quick selection.

All your replies are collected together, bundled up and compressed at the end of the session. Then the next time you call the BBS this file can be uploaded, in the same session that you download your next batch of new messages.



The opening screen from the Blue Wave mailing system

Messages

Q-Blue understands both QWK and Blue Wave style message bundles. It can read messages produced by any mail door compatible with either of these, and create replies that they can understand. A BBS near you is likely to have at least one door available which you can use.

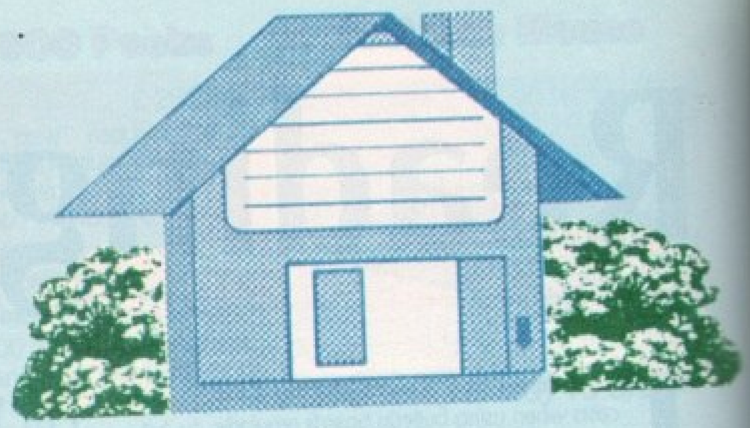
Ask the sysop for guidance and he or she will tell you what to do on that particular board. A BBS which supports mail doors will almost certainly have Q-Blue available for download.

The unregistered version is slightly disabled in that no more than five replies may be uploaded at any one time. If you register ($20) this restriction is lifted. Meanwhile you have a month to try it out before being obliged to register.



Reading a message offline in Q-Blue

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Breaking glass

Phil South opens out the Amos windowing system, and sheds some light on the subject

The Amiga is a WIMP system, and by this I don't mean it backs away from a fight. The idea of a computer interface containing Windows, Icons, Mice and Pointers was originally developed by Xerox at Palo Alto Research Centre.

When the Amiga was designed in 1984-5 GUIs were all the rage, so the designers incorporated a mouse and a GUI called Workbench in the new machine. Only with Amos can we get the real power of windows and menus. Although they're not the kind of windows you're used to in Intuition, they are as functiona.

If the kind of programs you want to write are more utility or productivity type, then you'll have to use the windowing functions of Amos. A window is basically an independent little area of text and graphics on the screen. To open a window on the screen you must employ the WIND OPEN command, like so:

```
Wind Open 1,10,10,50,10
```

This, for example, would open us a window on to the screen (window 1), which would have its top left corner at screen location 10,10 and would be 50 characters wide by 10 deep. The point of this is that you can have two or more windows on the screen at the same time, all with their own text and graphics, like this:

```
Screen Open 0,640,200,16,Hires
Cls 0
Flash Off
Paper 7 : Wind Open 1,0,0,40,20 : Print "This is
  window number 1..."
Paper 4 : Wind Open 2,320,0,40,20 : Print "...and
  this is number 2!"
Wait Key
```

Each window acts like a little version of the screen and anything you can write to a screen you can send to a window.

Picture windows

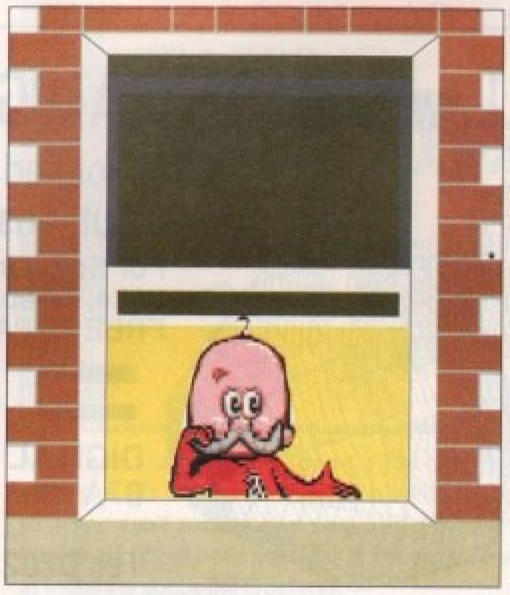
Although the windows you get in Amos aren't the same as the kind of thing you are used to in AmigaDOS, they still have a range of styles and shapes, and can be made to act like real windows with the minimum of tweaking.

For example, you can re-size them and even add gadgets like Intuition, but all this must be done manually as Intuition is not loaded when Amos is running, alas (all this is changing with Amos Professional, of course).

Re-sizing is a good example so let's look at that. Let's make a window on the screen which you can pull at the bottom right-hand corner by clicking on it with the left mouse button. The window can be re-sized on the screen, and when you let go of the button the window snaps to that shape.

In order to grab anything on the screen – unlike the very convenient Intuition code which does it all for you – you have to draw a window and then describe a Zone around it to sense the presence of a mouse click.

Then once you've sensed it you have to see where it moves, and then resize the window with



WIND SIZE. In this example program we first open a hi-res screen and set the colours as normal:

```
Screen Open 0,640,256,16,Hires
Paper 0 : Cls 0
```

Then we activate WIND SAVE, which means our windows are smart and don't screw up anything we might have on the screen below it. This is really groovy because it means you can open a window over a game screen for example, like an IFF file, and nothing on the screen will be erased when you close the window:

```
Wind Save
```

Next we RESERVE ZONE, which is what you do every time you are about to SET ZONE. What this means is that if you Reserve Zone 1 you are basically saying "look, I'm going to define a zone later on in the program, so allocate some memory for it and I'll get back to you":

```
Reserve Zone 1
```

Now we set up all the characteristics of the window we'll be defining, in this case Window 1 is a 20 x 20 character window, whose top left corner is positioned at location 10,50 on the screen. After that we set the BORDER and TITLE TOP funcdions to describe a little bit more about the window, like the title text, in this case "Grab my corner, man!", and the colours of the border:

```
Wind Open 1,10,50,20,20,1
Border ,0,4
Title Top " Grab my corner, Man! "
Set Zone 1,10,50 To 10+160,50+160
```

The last bit is the interesting part. Next we open up the Zone we promised earlier. It covers the area taken up by the window, and does this by specifying the Zone number, in this case 1, and the co-ords of the top left and bottom right corners of the Zone. Bottom right is set here by lazily multiplying the top left figures by 160, that is to say 8 x 20, 8 being the number of pixels in a character, and 20 being the width of the window. Then we're into the main loop of the program:

```
Do
   If Mouse Key=1 and Mouse Zone=1
      DX1=10 : DY1=50 : RESIZE_ME
      Reset Zone 1 : Set Zone 1,DX1,DY1 To DX2,DY2
      ZX=(DX2-DX1)/8 : ZY=(DY2-DY1)/8
      Wind Size ZX,ZY
   End If
Print "Amos Almanac. Better than a punch up the
throat... ";
Loop
```

This checks for the MOUSE KEY and MOUSE ZONE functions to see if the mouse is within the zone and if it has the left mouse button pressed down. If it does then the PROC called RESIZE_ME is activated.

The PROC then does all the work, creating a rubber band effect to show you where the sides of the window are, altering the variables containing the window co-ords, and checking to see if the mouse button has been released yet with the WHILE WEND loop:

```
Procedure RESIZE_ME
   Shared DX1,DX2,DY1,DY2
   Gr Writing 2
   Repeat
      If Mouse Key=1
         DX2=X Screen(X Mouse) : DY2=Y Screen(Y
Mouse)
         ODX=DX2 : ODY=DY2
         While Mouse Key=1
            Box DX1,DY1 To DX2,DY2
            DX2=X Screen(X Mouse) : DY2=Y
Screen(Y Mouse)
            Box DX1,DY1 To DX2,DY2
         Wend
         Box DX1,DY1 To ODX,ODY
         Box DX1,DY1 To DX2,DY2 : GOTIT=True
         If DX1>DX2 : T=DX1 : DX1=DX2 : DX2=T :
End If
         If DY1>DY2 : T=DY1 : DY1=DY2 : DY2=T :
End If
      End If
   Until GOTIT
   Gr Writing 1
End Proc
```

Once the button is released the window is redrawn to the new size. When the new co-ords have been stored the old Zone is cancelled and redrawn to the new size, and it's all ready to start again.

And there you have it, perfect windows, and not a single patch of putty in sight. Now you can create multiple-windowed programs and multi windowed games too! How about a dungeon master clone in the PD, then eh?

Write Stuff

If you have an Amos question, then please write to Phil South, Amos Column, Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP.

Faces for all occasions

Ben Pointer fills his hard drive with typefaces without having to sell his house to pay for them

Desktop publishers can never have enough typefaces, particularly if they design a lot of leaflets or advertisements. In past issues we've looked at shareware typefaces from George Thompson Service and the commercial Computer Safari typefaces from EM Computergraphic.

Both were extremely good value for money, but neither can top what PD-Soft has come up with – 300 typefaces on 15 disks for a penny under £40. That's about 13p each.

The faces are all in Adobe Type 1 format. For PageStream 2.1 and 2.2 users these can be used just as they are. The Font Manager part of the program needs to be used to add the new typefaces to the ProPage system, but after that it's just a case of selecting the typeface you want to use, and then using it.

No bells and whistles are provided on these disks. In order to give you as many typefaces as possible for your money, in most cases just the Adobe Font Metric (AFM) and Printer Font Binary (PFB) files are supplied.

Just typefaces

There are no icons to drag around, no automatic installation programs, no readme files, no example pictures... just the typefaces. On a few of the disks there are unnecessary files, like a 200k BMAP file on Disk 4 that is of no earthly use to Amiga owners — a little oversight that PD-Soft will no doubt rectify.

Installing them for PageStream isn't difficult, just a simple file copying job from the original disks to your PageStream fonts disk(s) or PageStream/PSFonts directory on your hard drive.

By far the easiest way to install the typefaces where you want them is to use a file manager utility like SID or DirWork. PD-Soft is a PD library, so if you don't already own one, it might be an idea to ask about a file manager at the same time as inquiring about the typefaces.

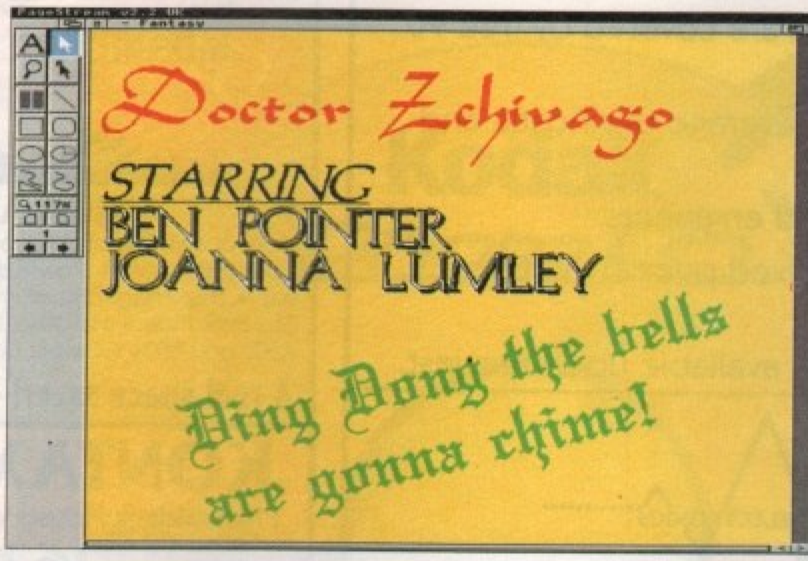
Now I've not had time to test all 300 faces with PageStream, but I've tried a couple at random from each disk and have had no problems.

Professional Page 3 and Professional Draw 3 users can also use Adobe Type 1 typefaces by running them through the FontManager program and converting to Compugraphic format.

Alas, not all the typefaces in this collection will convert. FontManager complains that some "can't be read", other times the program just hangs half way through the conversion.

It's a problem that other libraries have addressed by converting as many as will convert, and making up special Compugraphic collections. PD-Soft may well do the same with this collection, but that 300 may come down to as few as 150 or 200.

Once converted to Compugraphic, of course, these files can be converted a further time by Fountain for use with Workbench 2.



PD-Soft's 300 Adobe Type 1 Fonts work best with PageStream 2.1 and above. ProPage 3 and ProDraw 3 owners will need to convert to Compugraphic. All but one of the typefaces on display here failed to convert

300 Adobe Type 1 Fonts £39.99 (15 disks)
PD-Soft, 1 Bryant Avenue,
Southend-on-Sea SS1 2YD
Tel 0702 466933

Nothing new under the sun

Despite the "exclusive" claim by PD-Soft and the copyright message on the disk labels, all of the typefaces in this collection have been generated from Macintosh public domain and shareware typefaces.

If you have already bought shareware Compugraphic or Adobe Type 1 typefaces from companies like George Thompson Services or EM Computergraphic, then you will already own a fair number of the faces in this PD-Soft collection – perhaps as many as half of them, maybe more.

Studying the AFM files I can see that they have all been altered from how they were originally distributed, and each now contains a comment to the effect that the file has been "Converted/fixed for the Amiga" by 80 Track Software, the Stateside company from which PD-Soft has licensed the disks. Missing from all these AFM files are the original copyright messages put there by the original authors.

Also missing are the readme files that originally accompanied these shareware faces, the text files that identified the authors and specified the distribution and usage rights.

Some typefaces have had an "RS" prefix added to their names and appear to be newly-generated versions of older typefaces.

MiamiNights might be a typeface name you recognise? Or PoloSemiScript perhaps? How about LowerEastSide? Well, these and about 30 or 40 more faces are present in the collection as RSMiamiNights, RSPoloSemiScript, and so on.

The PFB files are different from the original generations of the same faces without the "RS" prefix, and the copyright messages of the original designers of the faces are not in these files. But apart from the fontname being different, they appear to be exactly the same designs as the originals.



There's something for every occasion, and even a few you'll probably never find a use for

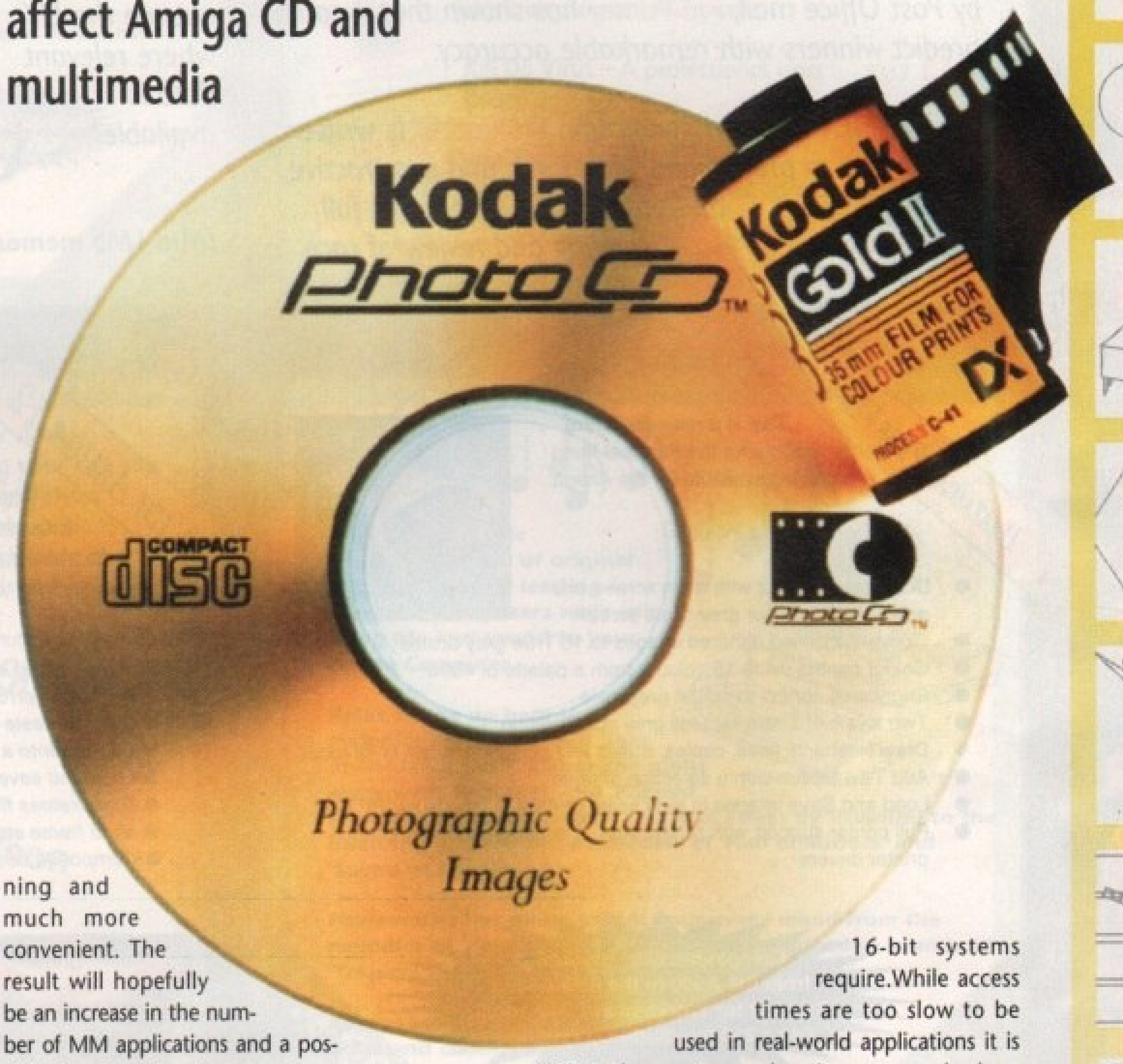
Now I'm not trying to climb on to the high moral ground here, I'm simply reporting my findings. And what I've found is a typeface for almost every occasion.

If you want something for the body text of a fanzine or newsletter, then you'll find serif and sans-serif faces here, including a few small type "families" like ClassicaRoman, Classicaltalic and ClassicHeavy — normal, slanted and bold versions of the same basic design.

Handwriting or cursive'faces abound, and there are a fair number of `black letter' faces, including one called Mariage that would look good on wedding invitations.

CD-ROM in top gear

Julius Alexander looks at new technologies that will affect Amiga CD and multimedia



The new Kodak CD-ROM based initiative known as PhotoCD is a new storage technology created by Kodak (you'd never have guessed!) for everyday 35mm photographs.

In the very near future you'll be able to take your snaps to a local shop and have them transferred to a gold-coloured PhotoCD disc. You can then wander home, slip this into your PhotoCD-compatible player and view your embarrassing party snaps on the television.

You need never worry about your photos fading, smeared with fingerprints or spoiled by spilled drinks again!

A £4.99 PhotoCD disc will hold roughly 100 images. Your photographs can be transferred to disk for £8.75 for 25 exposures, (I believe your existing negatives can also be converted) and a nationwide chain of shops to convert films is now being set up.

To view PhotoCDs you'll need a special player. Much to Commodore's embarrassment, CDTV can not, at present, handle the PhotoCD format. Embarrassing because, as older *AC* readers will know, Commodore originally announced that it would be compatible! CD-I is compatible, and there are also several PhotoCD specific players with prices starting at £299.

Rising sales

The advantages of PhotoCD for CDTV and CD-I are pretty obvious. In a fairly short period there will be a large number of people wanting to view their pictures, and sales of CDTV and CD-I products as potential viewing systems should rise accordingly.

Most interesting, however, are the advantages to multimedia users. As anyone involved with the production of MM applications knows, one of the more difficult areas of production is getting colour (or even black and white) images into the computer.

With the arrival of PhotoCD, however, you can wander around taking photographs, run the film down to a local shop and in a short time have them back in a digital format on a CD disc ready for use. This is a lot cheaper than traditional scanning and much more convenient. The result will hopefully be an increase in the number of MM applications and a possible drop in their price.

Another development set to have an impact on the Amiga is the Philips DCC – Digital Compact Cassette. Unlike normal cassettes, DCC is digital, which means that it will provide far superior quality – effectively CD-type sound reproduction.

But while having CD sound quality, it has the advantages of traditional tapes, in that you can record on DCCs, and compact size.

How can DCC technology squeeze enough information to reproduce high quality 16-bit sound for two hours play on to a cassette only slightly bigger than existing analogue magnetic types? The secret lies in a new compression system developed by Philips known as Precision Adaptive Sub-band Coding (PASC to its friends).

What this does is to watch the recording signal and record only what can be heard by the human ear. By doing so it can vary the bit rate being recorded and use a quarter of the space that 16-bit systems require.While access times are too slow to be used in real-world applications it is likely to have a tremendous impact on a back-up device with a cost of just £499 for recorder and player.

To finish off this month, I've just received news that the CD disc version of Sensible Soccer is going to be priced at a rock bottom £19.99! More interestingly, Commodore are actively promoting the idea of budget CDTV software (sub £10 is the figure being banded around).

Acceptance

So what, you may ask. OK, it's great news if you want that particular title, but what does it mean for the rest of us? Well consider that currently CDTV applications start at prices around £29. Also consider that the acceptance of CDTV depends largely on the applications that are available for it and their price.

There are roughly 110 applications, so no shortage there. It's merely a matter of price, and if, as I expect, other companies follow the lead and drop their prices accordingly, CDTV could soon have a mass of low price discs that will make CD-I look very expensive.

● Next month I'll be discussing Commodore's approach to CDTV.

New technology

Another new technology is the Sony MiniDisc, which could well end up overshadowing both CDTV and CD-I systems. Why? Well suppose I described a technology that offered compact cassettes (smaller than CDs), capacities of roughly 220Mb and fast access time but which could also be written to – wouldn't you want it?

Given this specification, MiniDisc's could easily replace CDs. Alternatively it could just become a rival, but I can't see Sony settling for that.

Another new technique to appear is the CD-based gear called CD-R. Unlike normal CDs, which are WORM systems (Write Once, Read Many), CD-R can be written to many times. Currently CD-R is limited in that you can only write an entire CD at a time, rather than jumping in and recording tracks, then play other parts and go back and record another track. But it's a step in the right direction, and has an interesting future.

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Pro-Punter 2

Pro-Punter II is a remarkable piece of software that gives you a much higher than average chance of winning on the horses.

Officially proven to the racing press and other magazines by sending time and date franked letters by Post Office mail, **Pro-Punter** has shown that it can predict winners with remarkable accuracy.

NEW

The NEW second generation **Pro-Punter** is written to professional standards and is attractive and easy to use. It features full editing and review of race data entered and also a unique low-maintenance database that does not need constant updating.

International users please note that, in addition to UK features, **Pro-Punter II** contains unique course/going/class editors and will configure to metric weights/ distances, thus allowing configuration for racing anywhere outside the UK where relevant data is available.

Pro-Punter

(Min 1Mb memory required)

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DAATASCAN PROF VER 3



This is a major software update for the Pandaal hand scanner available for the Amiga.

The new features include:

- Dual screen layout with main screen and additional 16 colour grey scale screen.
- Convert scanned dithered images to 16 True grey scales
- Colour control using 16 colours from a palette of 4096
- Brightness control to adjust greyscale
- Two levels of Zoom with full grey scale editing
- Draw freehand, lines, circles, boxes and polygons in line or fill mode
- Add Text Option with a selection of fonts
- Load and Save images in grey scale or dithered mode as IFF files
- Full printer support with printer scaling supporting all Workbench printer drivers

Compatible with any Amiga from the A500 to the new A4000. Support for Workbench 1.3, 2 and 3. 640 x 256 (medium) screen mode

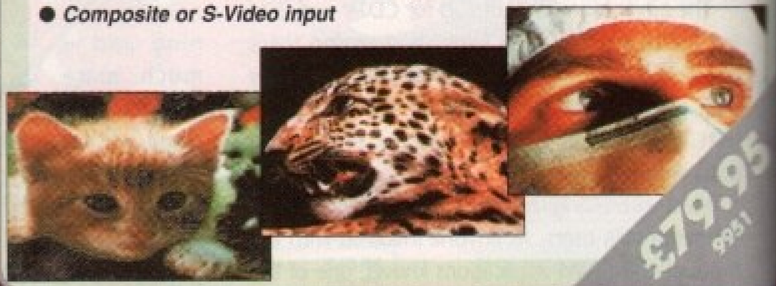
£89.95 9845

VIDI AMIGA 12

Vidi Amiga 12 is the ultimate low cost colour digitiser for the Amiga. There are no filters and no separate RGB Splitter. Colour images can be captured in less than a second, mono images are grabbed in real time. Fully compatible with any video source.

Some of the features include:

- ***Multi-tasking software***
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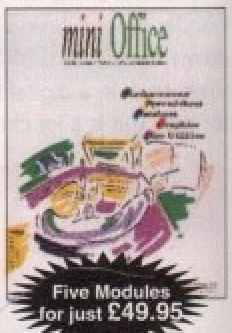
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POWERPACKER includes several freely distributable utilities which access packed files at the click of an icon, so you can get full and quick use of them without decrunching.

PPMORE A fully-pledged screen text reader with options for string search and sending an on-screen image to a graphics printer. **PPANIM** Plays a crunched anim file. Tremendous savings possible for storing and playing your animations. **PPTYPE** Formats a crunched text file to the printer, including pagination and perforation skips.

Plus **DECRUNCH**, a utility that restores files to original sizes. **POWERPACKER PROFESSIONAL** © 1990 By Nico François

Features:

- **Make your files 70% smaller!**
  Crunch (compact) executable/datafiles and make your files to 70% smaller. With the help of the PPloadseg utility, which you can install on your (hard) disk, you now can even crunch libraries and devices.
- **Extra Powerpacker utilities**
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  PPshow >> Displays packed IFF pictures, PPanim >> Displays packed animations
- **Comes with 2 new libraries.**
  Powerpacker and a new requester library with even more features and better menus.
- **Crunchfactor even better than version 3.0b**
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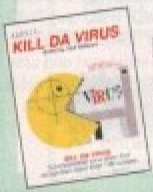
Latest Version June 92

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UGA PRODUCTS

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Huge Professional – A complete program for producing icons, sprites, brushes and bobs	9855	£17.95





POWERFONTS

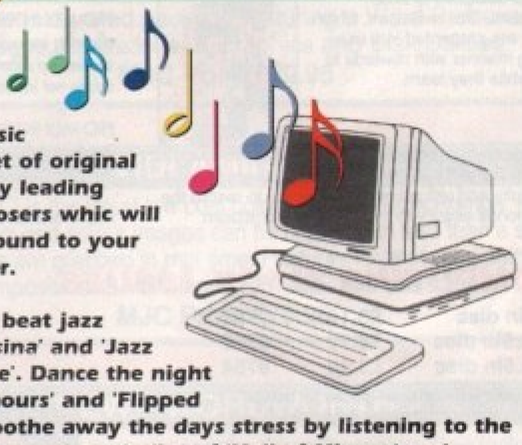
Powerfonts will enhance your Amiga Computer graphics transforming your text into a variety of new, original and exciting styles. Powerfonts includes styles from Ancient Gothic to Futuristic and there are over 30 different styles to choose from. Powerfonts created from artists originals, are contained on a 3 disk set and include the following fonts:

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WORKSTATION 2

Are you confused by CLI? Baffled by backups? Frustrated by files? Here's your answer...

WorkStation 2 is here

NEW For all users of A500 Plus, A1500 and A600

£4.50 Including fully detailed, easy-to-understand manual

Have you got the very latest Amiga? If so, you need the ultimate Workbench 2 accessory. Whether you have an A500 Plus, A600, A1500 or perhaps a Kickstart upgrade on a 1.3 machine, the time has come to take control thanks to the amazing WorkStation 2. It's the disk the Amiga world has been waiting for...

WorkStation 2 has been designed specifically for the new breed of Amigas with the express purpose of simplifying the computing process while providing all the computing tools you'll ever need.

This indispensable collection of utilities includes the very latest and best shareware compiled within a smooth and simple user friendly interface. No more CLI or Shell, a simple point and click is all you'll ever need...

Virus Checker – With the virus explosion of the last few years, safeguarding your software is an essential task. Thanks to Workstation 2 the very latest virus checker is ready to protect your whole collection.

Qed – After its massive success on the original WorkStation disk we have added the very latest version of this excellent text editor. Ideal for all kinds of word processing and script writing needs.

This is just a small selection of the tools and utilities on offer. Others include ScreenX and GFXMem.

For the artists out there Icon Edit awaits to produce customised icons, while NickPrefs adds the option for a 16 colour designer backdrop, animated pointers and non clicking floppies. Screen blanker provides a tailor made designer look to your system and transforms the appearance of your Workbench screen forever.

If you have Workbench 2, you need WorkStation 2!

TDM – At the heart of WorkStation 2 awaits the best file management software around. A program which alone makes the need for mastery of the CLI and Shell a thing of the past. Copy, move, delete and much more with a simple mouse click. Play samples, view pictures and customise the program to your own design in seconds.

MultiDos – Let your Amiga communicate with the rest of the world. Thanks to this powerful program you can read, write and format PC disks from the comfort of your own machine.

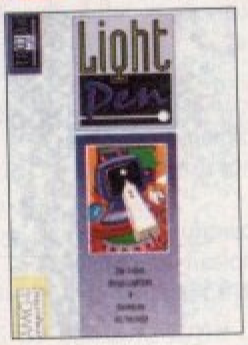
Fixdisk – The ultimate disk repair software which can cure even the most ailing floppy disks and hard drives. When all the others give up Fixdisk goes on to save the seemingly un-saveable.

Also available:

WorkStation	9858	£3.50
GraphicStation	9876	£4.50

£4.50 9519

Trojan Light Pen



Attention All Designers!

The Trojan Amiga compatible lightpen can be used as a complete replacement for the mouse in many applications. Particularly useful in drawing and design, the two button pen provides the user with a very direct method of control.

This package also includes KWIKDRAW - a lightpen compatible drawing program, plus a lightpen driver that allows the pen to be used with most programs that run from Amiga Workbench. The lightpen is also compatible with: *DPaint III and IV, Photon Paint, Workbench 1.2/1.3, Battlechess, Professional Page, Music-X and Audiomaster V2.*

Easy to use, the Trojan lightpen will have you producing designs and drawings that are far superior to those produced using a mouse.

Code	Product	Price
9870	Trojan Light Pen	£34.95

Fun School Specials

Paint 'n Create

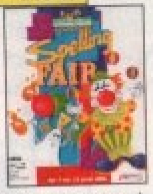
(for over 5 years) – from the makers of Fun School, is designed to allow children to exercise their creative talents – with a practical bias. Contains 6 exciting modules to express your creativity.



Code	Product	Price
9993	Paint 'n Create	£19.95
9966	Merlin's Maths	£19.95
9967	Spelling Fair	£19.95

Merlin's Maths

(for ages 5-11) – 6 fun, colourful and entertaining modules designed to keep children enthralled for hours. The exercises, which cover all the basic skills, are presented in a user-friendly and encouraging manner with rewards to keep the child amused while they learn.



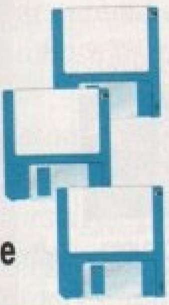
Spelling Fair

(for ages 7-13) – 6 fun-packed fairground oriented modules guide the child through the intricacies of basic grammer and spelling. 3 levels of difficulty and unique reporting facility to record the child's progress. Corresponds exactly to the National Curriculum.

Bundle Of Disks

Did you miss out on any of the 1991 Amiga Computing Cover Discs?

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Code	Product	Price
9840	Jan-Jun 91	£9.00
9841	Jun-Dec 91	£9.00
9839	Jan-Dec 91	£15.00

Pro Midi Interface

This attractive wedge shaped Midi Interface incorporates MIDI-IN, MIDI-THRU and TWO MIDI-OUT ports. The flat ribbon cable plugs straight into the Amigas serial port and uses high quality computer standard ribbon cable that eliminates the possibilities of data loss between the computer and interface.



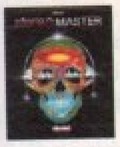
PRO MIDI INTERFACE can be positioned alongside the computer rather than behind it so that swapping cables from one Midi device to another becomes a simple task.

Code	Product	Price
9513	Pro Midi Interface	£22.95
9814	Stereo Master	£34.95

PRO MIDI INTERFACE comes with a disk full of public domain programs allowing immediate use, plus a user's guide that explains Midi and how to connect up different devices to the computer. (Midi cables not included).

PRO MIDI INTERFACE is a full professional standard interface, fully compatible with all Midi keyboards, drum machines etc.

Also available: Stereo Master



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9521	Personal Finance Manager Plus	£34.99

Game Maker's Manual

Amiga Game Maker's Manual – with AMOS Basic

by Stephen Hill



Stephen is the author of Sigma's best-selling *The Game Maker's Manual* for the Atari ST - and he's the author of the new AMOS (Amiga Operating System) Manual, so nobody is better placed to write this book.

The creator of AMOS, Francois Lionette, has produced the most powerful games programming system. With it, Amiga games equivalent to such best sellers as Xenon 2 and Blood Money can be produced – it's so straightforward that many people will buy an Amiga simply to run AMOS Basic.

The contents include: Game planning - graphic design, mock-ups and sprites; Shoot-'em-ups - high speed AMOS sprites, fire control, collision detection, background animation; Simulations - from simple 3D movement to flight simulators; Role playing - characters, scenarios and magic; Adventure games - plans, rooms and commands; Animation, scrolling, sound and 3D; Links to assembler. Numerous tested, working programs illustrate the book.

Code	Product	Price
9886	Game Maker's Manual	£16.95

Amiga Computing Back Issues

October 1992 + 3.5in disc	£3.10	9752
November 1992 + 3.5in disc	£3.10	9753
December 1992 + 3.5in disc	£3.10	9754

Back issues from other months are available – phone for details
Add £2 Europe/Eire, £3.50 Overseas for postage per issue

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July 1992 - December 1992 + 3.5in disc	£18.00	9850

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5 random Cover Discs	£7.50	9887
25 random Cover Discs	£20.00	9888

Re-Ink



Code	Product	Price
9998	Re-Ink	£12.95

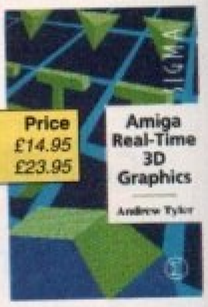
Binder



Code	Product	Price
9509	Binder	£5.95

Real-Time 3D Graphics

Code	Product	Price
9833	Real-Time 3D Graphics (Book only)	£14.95
9833	Real-Time 3D Graphics (Book and Disc)	£23.95



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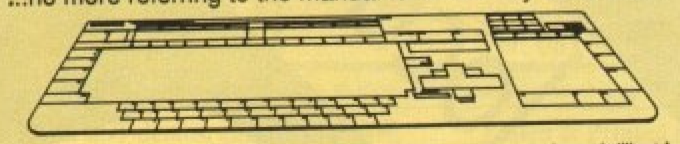
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Mail order mauling

What you had to say about the mail order industry

Two months ago, we asked you to reply to a mail order survey and give us your thoughts on the current state of the Amiga mail order industry.

The results were startling, and highlight several serious flaws in an industry which has for years been the subject of vociferous attacks through Ezra's mailbag.

Judging from the answers given to our survey questions, it is clear that only the hardened buyers among you decided that mail order was important enough to warrant comment.

Fully 65 per cent of you have, apparently, placed orders with advertisers five times or more in the last year.

Of all orders placed, 63 per cent were made on the telephone by credit card, and only two per cent (all of whom were younger readers) sent cash in the post. Average delivery times varied sharply, but settled at around the five or six days mark.

Alarmingly, 48 per cent of respondents had suffered the ultimate mail order rip-off when, having ordered goods and paid for them, the goods failed to turn up.

With the high number of credit card sales, this is partly offset by purchase insurance, but it is a deplorable situation all the same.

Complaining

What is perhaps more disturbing is that 65 per cent of you have never complained to a magazine about such advertisers, never mind taking the matter to the Trading Standards Officer or the police.

If this indicates a British unwillingness to complain, then the problems with mail order will simply drag on until we become a more bolshy lot.

Just over half our readers have phoned a company to congratulate them on their excellent service, so why are so few abused mail order customers willing to raise a stink when conned or badly treated?

On a brighter note, after-sales service and technical support in particular came in for a fair degree of positive response.

The average willingness of companies to replace faulty goods was about 60 per cent, though this drops to 26 percent when a full refund is demanded, hinting at the continuing practice for companies from all sectors of the economy to conveniently forget statutory rights.

Over three-quarters of you expressed satisfaction with the technical support you have received – a noticeable improvement if the level of support available a couple of years ago is anything to go by. As the vast majority feel that they are entitled to technical support no matter what the purchase, be it so humble as a RAM expansion, it's not surprising so many companies have reacted to the demand.

Factors affecting your decision on whether to buy from a company are very difficult to analyse. Most respondents strongly emphasised every criteria we mentioned, with the notable exception of the style of advertisements, which most decided was of little importance.

Perhaps this points to the traditional attitude that we are never swayed by something so crass as an advertisement (though advertising executives would hotly dispute this), but what is clear is that we tend to expect prices, delivery, and after-sales service to be top notch.

On the questions concerning which companies you thought were particularly good or bad, there were almost as many answers as there were responses.

What this indicates is a general industry-wide problem. Mail order companies have to realise that one bitterly disappointed customer is bad not only for their company's business but for the whole industry. We are hearing a lot at the moment about business and consumer confidence, and if confidence has dropped as much as they say since the mail order survey was taken, it's about time companies took the initiative to bolster their customers at every opportunity.

Customers are a precious commodity these days, and should be invested in rather than simply used. Money spent on technical support helplines, decent delivery services, and staff who are helpful rather than obstructive is money which in the long term will make its way back into the company's coffers three-fold.

Box-shifters who take a short-term view (and there are plenty of them) deserve no better than they get – a shrinking market, disgruntled punters who never return, and liquidation.

With a little more thought and a lot more effort in the customer services sector, mail order confidence will gradually increase.

Judging from our survey, where the general level of confidence (and therefore trust) was only about 60 per cent, the industry needs it as badly as every other industry at the moment

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Shop Window

Amiga Market looks at a wide selection of the very latest hardware and software

Boom box

Now have you ever been sat down on a Sunday listening to the latest charts roll in? I expect many of you have, and have you ever thought to yourself that the last record you heard would have been a lot better if the drums were a bit more up tempo or the bass was a bit louder?

If you have been thinking about this, well stop thinking and get mixing because Boom Box – the latest release from Dr T's music software – is here, and it'll more than likely change the face of music as we know it – sort of!

On the cover, Dr T's issues a warning: "Caution: Boom Box may be more fun than you're prepared for."

Boom Box is designed so you can have interactive fun with music. "Fun? You've got to be joking!" says the experienced muso who spends hours and hours in the recording studio messing and fiddling about with millions of knobs and buttons.

Well that's what it says on the box and it certainly persuaded me to boot up the disks and see what fun was in store.

Once loaded you are presented with a screen which looks like, surprise surprise, a Boom Box. It's got a couple of speakers at the side of the screen, a tape deck at the top of the screen, a few controls dotted here and there and even a tape counter.

It doesn't exactly look like hi-tech stuff, more like something you'd find at Boots for under £15! This screen simply lets you play preset tunes and at the same time mess about with the volume sliders and re-record them to your required taste.

There are four volume sliders. One for the drums, one for the bass, one for the synthesiser and last, but by no means least one for the rap track.

The intriguing rap track is simply the track on which you can play up to six selected samples. This is not the only screen, thank goodness – it would be a bit boring if that was it.

No, there are another two screens – the Remix screen and the Jam screen.

The remix screen works a lot like the Boom Box screen, only it lets you do a lot more things. You can record your own mix as before, except you now you can change the tempo, add effects with FX sliders and use the solo/rap pads to trigger and play samples.

The Remix screen is limited, though – it will let you watch the patterns that are playing, but you can't change the actual patterns.

For instance, if you don't like the bass bit of the tune, you can't actually alter it to a different bass melody apart from turning it down or off. You can add some effects, but even they don't make much difference.

The solo pads are probably one if not the best options in Boom Box. These samples range from James Brown to hardcore rave noises.

The only slight problem is that you tend to get the two different styles of sound (ie funk and rave) in the one set of six solo pads, so when you remix the tune it does sound slightly odd.

The Jam screen gives you the most flexibility in Boom Box thus you'll find yourself using this screen almost all the time. The screen lets you do everything you can do on the remix screen plus it lets you change the patterns. This forces the question, why have the remix screen in the first place?

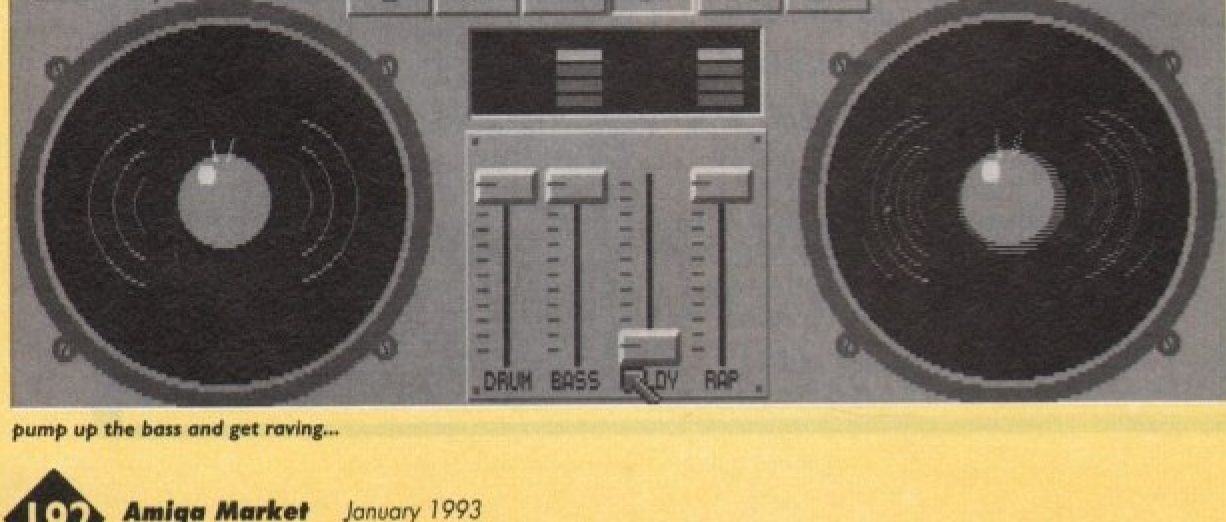
When I said that it lets you change the pattern I don't mean that it lets you change the pattern completely. On each pattern you can change it so that it hops from one pre-defined pattern to another.

So, you only get a choice of four pre-defined patterns. It's not as flexible as the package leads you to believe.

In the Jam and Remix modes there is the special FX section



Time to remix and get down



pump up the bass and get raving...

The storage of computer information seems to have gone full circle. We went from hardware-only games to magnetic cassettes, huge Winchester hard disks to the floppy disk and the compact hard disk.

Then last year things called tape streamers started popping up – pieces of hardware that enabled you to back up floppy disks and even the contents of your whole hard drive.

These systems are still being developed but some American blokes thought: "Hey, if you can do it with audio cassettes then why not use a video?" Thus the video streamer was born. It enables you to transfer 400Mb of games or application onto a four-hour video.

I almost burst out laughing when I saw the Video Backup System, but it does look like a really badly put together package. Things didn't improve when I opened the box.

Lying there was a serial port adaptor with two phone leads hanging out of the back and another separate phone lead and one disk.

So being very cautious I wired up the hardware



as mentioned previously. You can place the special FX on any track.

You can change the FX by using the three sliders placed at the top of the screen. The FX time slider changes the duration of the effect, the FX repeats slider sets the number of times the effect is repeated and finally the pitch slider changes the pitch of the effect.

The only problem with this is that when you change the FX for the drum track, the same FX will be used for the bass, rap and synthesiser tracks, so you find all your tracks with the same effects placed on top of them. Not entirely helpful.

Right I'm afraid it's own up time. If you've just read the previous text then you'll probably think that Boom Box sounds fairly promising and you might even think about rushing about buying it.

Stop, don't do anything rash just yet. I've forgotten on purpose about mentioning the actual sound of the music. Oh dear. Boom Box would be a very good product if it wasn't for the actual sound quality.

The drums are all right, the samples aren't that bad apart from the different styles of music being combined on the same set, the bass isn't that bad even though it's the same bass sound throughout, but the synthesiser is awful.

Have you seen that bit out of Smith and Jones at the end with the two pub musos? Well it's like that, but much, much worse. It just doesn't seem to fit in with all the rest of the tracks.

Not too much of a problem if you like rave music and just fancy the bass and the drums, but not much cop if you don't.

Plus most of the tunes sound like they've been written by a drunken out-of-work muso, but they probably made the tunes awful just so that you have to remix them.

Perhaps the only major disappointment about Boom Box just happens to be the most important part of the whole package. At the end of the day anybody who's seriously into music will frown upon Boom Box and even let out a small sneer.

It wouldn't be too bad as a education package for small school children, simply because it's so easy to use, plus they wouldn't really notice the bad points because making music on the school computer would be a lot more fun than playing those blasted recorders and triangles.

Oh and by the way the fun lasts right up to the point where you are just about to click on the Play button.

What could have been one of the best and most fun music packages seems to have faltered at the first hurdles due to someone not thinking things through. It's a damn good idea and maybe someone, somewhere will bring a more improved product because I'm sure there is a market out there for this kind of package.

Supplier: Zone Distribution
Phone: 071-738 5444
Price: £39.95

Zappo hardware range

It's always been the case that, should you wish to upgrade your existing Amiga, you'll do it with various bits and pieces made by companies like Power.

Or you can spend a vast fortune on the best upgrades for your Amiga, using NEC or Cumana floppy drives and a GVP hard drive. But wouldn't it be nice to get the whole thing in a bundle?

Well Zappo have listened. Granted, they don't have a name which merits unending trust, but we thought that their hardware bundle was well worth a look.

The first piece I looked at was the floppy drive, On first impression it looks like a bog standard floppy drive – most do until you inspect them more closely.

The Zappo floppy is a very sturdy little drive which feels a lot more substantial than some horrible cheap replacement drives.

Another thing in its favour is size – there is nothing worse than a really chunky drive that looks like a house brick (who said CDTV?).

It has all the reasonably standard features on it like a jumper switch which enables you to turn your drive off if unneeded, and unlike your internal drive the Zappo is quite quiet and doesn't sound like it's eating your disk.

The next part of the pack that we looked at was the 40Mb hard drive. In my opinion this is one of the best looking A500 hard drives I've seen.

It's very similar to the design pioneered by GVP. Basically it follows the wedge shape of the machine, so when it's plugged in it makes your A500 look like a wheelchair ramp, but it's slightly more aesthetically pleasing than just having a metal box plonked on the side.

Where the design outdoes the GVP is in the game switch. Instead of having a big ugly switch on the top of the drive, all you have to do is hold down the mouse button – it will automatically go to the Amiga hand.

A lot of the A500 hard drives released recently have neglected the fact that you often need to upgrade the amount of memory you have in the machine.

The Zappo has space for up to 8Mb in SIMM chips to upgrade your machine to a bit of a beast.

The controller card on the drive is a dataflyer. Although it's not the best quality card that you can lay your hands on, it's pretty reliable. The disk itself is a Conner, more famous for being PC drives but nonetheless having a good reputation.

As I tell everyone when I review a peripheral, as a rule it's better that it has its own power supply than running directly from the machine itself – this cuts down on crashes and those infinitely annoying Guru Mediation messages.

The Zappo has the best of both worlds – if the hard drive is your only peripheral it won't matter too much, but if you have various bits and bobs hanging out of your machine then you can ➤

Video Backup System

accordingly and went ahead with manual in hand.

The first point that must be stressed is that you must have a video with a Video Out port.

Premise number one – I tried to use my video which is quite a modern one but it didn't have a Video Out port. Once you have found yourself a video with the relevant ports then you must wire up the hardware properly.

The software is a pleasure to use. As soon as you've booted up you are faced with simple options that are described in two words.

Once you have chosen an option – for instance, you want to back up a floppy disk – then it will take you through the options with no hassle. It's all very user friendly.

As soon as you have got to the stage when you have to start the video running the software will run a check to see if the hardware is set up properly.

Premise number two – on some videos the check will register that the hardware is set up incorrectly even when it is not. This is due to a non-standard wiring design.

I also had this problem when using the program. It is possible to turn this checker off but you have to distinguish between having a problem in the first place and your video being different.

Yes, Video Backup may look ungainly and it's not the most compatible piece of hardware in the world but it does work, it is moderately fast and the logging of the various files is easy.

Plus you can just restore games and applications straight on to a new disk. But make sure you use a new clean tape and look after it when you have done the backing up.

Supplier: White Knight Technologies
Phone: 0992 714539
Price: £65

Shop Window

power the drive by an external supply. Just to top the collection off we got a Zappo bag, the Zap Sac. This tasty little number is a carry case for the A600 which is cunningly disguised as a rucksack.

Lovingly coloured in retina-melting yellow and blue the bag really does stand out as a bit of a turkey. It even has wide front pockets to stash piles of games in.

I know I'm being a little harsh, several times in the past I have wished that I had a bag for my A500. It's just a shame that it's been done in such horrible colour – but I'm no fashion critic.

Supplier: Indi Telesales
Phone: 0606 43860
Prices: External drive – £49.95
Hard drive – £299.99
Zap Sac – £12.99

Noddy's Playtime

Noddy's Playtime by The Jumping Bean Co is a graded creativity and entertainment package aimed at youngsters between the ages of three to seven.

It does indeed feature Noddy and all his Toytown chums and it ties in nicely with the BBC's animation series due to be screened at the end of the year.

The idea behind this education package is simple. The youngster using Noddy's Playtime has to drive Noddy in his car and explore the magic of Toytown visiting the eight special learning locations. Each location tests the child's abilities.

For example the Railway Station tests the youngster's ability to memorise objects. On the train there are six people then the shutters close and the child has to guess where one of the people is. He/she gets three chances to guess and to help slightly the shutters rise so the child has more chance to guess. Other locations include the farmyard where the child has to match the two parts of an animal's body together or there is the Post Office which tests the child's ability at counting.

Each location is topped off with lots of great little animations and sounds. At each location there is the chance to use the junior art package which will help develop the child's creative ability.

There is the picture colouring section which allows the child to colour in a pre-defined picture or the child can used his/her natural talents and do a bit of freehand drawing with coloured pens and spray cans. It'll certainly stop them scribbling all over your kitchen walls.

One of the best options in the junior art package is the electronic "fuzzy felts". I used to love playing with fuzzy felts when I was a small lad and using the package in this way took me straight back to those good 'ole days.

The fuzzy felts idea is very simple and very effective – the program simply has pre-defined brushes and allows the child to stamp them all over the place.

Now you might be a bit worried about your child using the mouse – well have no fear, the whole system is designed to make everything easy to use.

The mouse system allows the child to click once and then draw, so a child with tiny hands won't have to keep the mouse button down. The art package has user friendly icons so that even the youngest member of the family can learn and have fun.

There is a choice of three carefully defined learning levels so as the child progresses, so does Noddy's Playtime.

Also included in the package is a comprehensive manual and parent teacher guide, so you will be able to get the best out of the package.

Overall Noddy's Playtime is an excellent educational package. I certainly had a lot of fun playing it so it's practically assured that child from three to seven will love it. I expect even some parents will buy it and say that they bought it for their kids!

Noddy's Playtime is bright, colourful, easy to use and a lot of fun – the perfect ingredients for a good educational package. It says on the advert for Noddy that "Education was never this much fun" and damn it, they're right you know.

Supplier: The Jumping Bean Co
Phone: 0602 792838
Price: £24.99



Noddy's Playtime – the perfect ingredients for a good educational package

Spelling Fair

Europress Software is most famous for its Fun School range which has proved both extremely popular and enduring over the past few years.

The winning features of this grade A educational software include its colourful characters and ease of use, and the range of activities covered.

Not unnaturally, the firm is keen to capitalise still more on its domination of the competitive children's educational software market, and is now introducing the Fun School Specials range, one of which is Spelling Fair.

The "Specials" have been introduced in response to requests from parents and teachers for software which covers specific activities like spelling, maths and creativity skills in greater depth.

So how does Spelling Fair, which incidentally conforms to National Curriculum standards, answer the challenge?

For a start, the range of options available with this package, aimed at 7 to 13-year-olds, is exceptionally good. The teacher or parent can choose one of 20 existing word lists or input as many of his or her own lists as required, with the obvious advantage of being able to focus on words which are causing pupils problems.

Spelling Fair also includes a special needs bank of words. These are to help those with dyslexia or other learning difficulties, for use in Mechanical Grab, one of the program's six games which are – as you might expect from the title – all based on fairground fun.

Games are played at one of three levels of difficulty, which can be altered at the press of a single function key, and there are also good reporting facilities, so that the tutor can check on the progress being made, again at the press of a key.

In this way, any words with which a child has a problem can be immediately identified.

Perhaps it was simply for variety - or maybe Europress wanted to avoid any possibility of being labelled sexist - but tutor or child can also choose which of two characters accompanies them around the fairground attractions.

The default character is an amusing little chap called Arnie, but you can go the options screen and choose his female counterpart, Zoe, instead if you wish.

Some of the six games are more attractive and involve more animation than the others, but the graphics in every case are brightly coloured and all should appeal, particularly to younger children.

In Coconut Shy, the letters of a correctly spelled word, plus two or three unnecessary letters depending on level selected, appear on coconuts. The child clicks the mouse pointer on each letter to be removed in turn. After each unnecessary let-

ter is selected, Arnie – or Zoe if she's been chosen – throws a ball and knocks the coconut bearing the selected letter off its stand.

If the child selects an incorrect letter – ie one which forms part of the word – the ball bounces back towards Arnie or Zoe.

When all of the extra letters have been removed, the remaining coconuts jump up and down to a piece of fairground music before the next word is loaded.

Test Your Strength deals with plurals, and features a strongman who has four bell-ringing machines – the kind operated with a massive mallet and brute strength.

Each of the machines carries a possible spelling of the plural of a word, the singular version of which is at the bottom of the screen.

Only by hitting the machine bearing the correct spelling can the strongman ring the bell. The child chooses the machine with the mouse pointer.

Every so often, the strongman is treated to a round of applause by a small audience which grows by one person each time he rings the bell.

Mechanical Grab – I always loved those things, didn't you? – involves control of a "grabber" with which Arnie or Zoe, at the young student's instigation, picks up part of a word to complete the rest of the word which appears on a platform.

If the child chooses correctly, Arnie or Zoe is rewarded with a chocolate clown.

Depending on whether level 1, 2 or 3 is chosen, the child must pick up the end, beginning or middle of words respectively.

Haunted House deals with homophones. For the uninitiated, these are not ghosts with unusual tendencies, but similar-sounding words.

Arnie or Zoe can only get into the haunted house if the child can provide some help in choosing the correct words from several homophones – for instance, there, their and they're – to complete sentences.

Circus Word is a crossword game. Clues appear at the bottom of the screen as the mouse pointer touches the starting point of a word in the grid, and answers are typed in using the keyboard.



The cheeriest human cannonball in existence?

The reward for completing a crossword is a human cannonball show.

In Word Juggle, letters of words appear on juggling balls – but some of them are in the wrong order. The child transposes the misplaced letters by clicking on the pairs which are to swap positions. When the correct spelling is arrived at, the child is rewarded with a juggling act.

There are no major problems with this excellent package which manages to tackle the problems of spelling in some considerable depth while remaining highly entertaining and visually very attractive.

Given that you can input your own word banks for use with three of the games (Coconut Shy, Circus Word and Word Juggle) the depth can, to a great extent, be defined by the tutor.

However, there are a couple of minor niggles. It would be far more intuitive to click on an OK button after setting options on various selection screens, rather than hitting the Esc key (the 38-page user guide which comes with the package does explain the use of the Esc key in this context, but you should hardly need to consult a guide to find out how to leave an options screen).

The guide itself, while well written and containing some very useful lists of words, does not contain a single screenshot to help make explanations clearer.

And just a few of the definitions from which children are expected to find words in some of the games are, to say the least, a little less than helpful. For instance, what four-letter word do you get from the clue: "Move in something"?

Are we talking about moving something in, or moving inside something? In actual fact, we could just as easily be moving on something, because the answer is "ride"!

Fortunately, other pointers – like, for instance, some letters of the answer appearing in the crossword grid as other clues ➤



Choose correctly and you can enter the Haunted House...

Shop Window

are answered – always help you to get there in the end. And if all else fails, pressing the Help key gives you a further, helpful clue.

All in all, Spelling Fair is quality educational software which will entertain and delight – as well as improving spelling abilities.

Supplier: Europress Software
Phone: 0625 859333
Price: £25.99

Floptical

"Floptical" has to be one of the weirdest names for an Amiga accessory I've ever come across, but this device is definitely not weird at all. In fact it's rather a neat idea.

All normal disk drives use magnetic signals to store data on an ordinary floppy disk. The Floptical, however, uses a combination of both magnetic and optical signals to store its data, which means you get just over 20Mb per disk.

The Floptical comes in two different varieties – an internal A1500/2000/3000 kit and an external kit which can be used on all machines including the A500.

The Floptical that was used for this review was an external type connected to the through port on a GVP HD8+ working on an A500 Plus, but the Floptical should work on all Amigas with any Workbench.

One of the first things you notice about the external version is its immense size, almost twice the size of the hard drive I was using.

Although the unit is quite large there's not really a lot inside the casing – just a power transformer, a fan, and the actual drive unit, which looks identical to a normal 3.5in floppy drive unit, though packing much more punch.

The Floptical is a SCSI device which needs a controller to operate. Unfortunately, it does not have a SCSI controller on board, which means it has to be plugged into either a controller of its own or into a through port on the back of an existing controller/hard drive. This can be a problem if you don't have either of these. If you own an Amiga 1500, 2000, or 3000, you can get a SCSI interface for about £129, but it's not so simple a job on the A500. At the moment there are only a few companies offering SCSI controllers for the A500.

As long as you have a SCSI hard drive with a through port you simply plug the supplied cable from the Floptical to the back of the hard drive, then just plug the power cable in and off you go.

Once up and running the Floptical acts just like a normal disk drive, enabling you to format the Floptical disk as you would a normal disk. Once formatted the Floptical disks can be used for the same purposes as a normal disk.

The makers of the Floptical say it can also read PC, Mac and Amiga, but unfortunately the unit I tested did not, due to the fact that we didn't have the software needed to mount the drive to read all formats. The software should be available soon, probably before you read this review.

As for what you would use the Floptical for, this is entirely up to you. It's a pretty good all-rounder as far as storage devices go, but as it offers far more storage space than a standard floppy it's only real opposition comes from the good old hard drive.

There are several points to consider when buying extra storage devices, such as speed, expandability, and price per Mb of space.

If you consider the average price of a hard drive is between £300 and £400 for about 52Mb of storage space against £289 for the internal Floptical and £389 for the external version, then the Floptical seems rather expensive. However, the Floptical once purchased offers far cheaper extra storage space with Floptical disks costing between £12 and £15 each for an extra 21Mb of storage. With a hard drive you have to buy another drive.

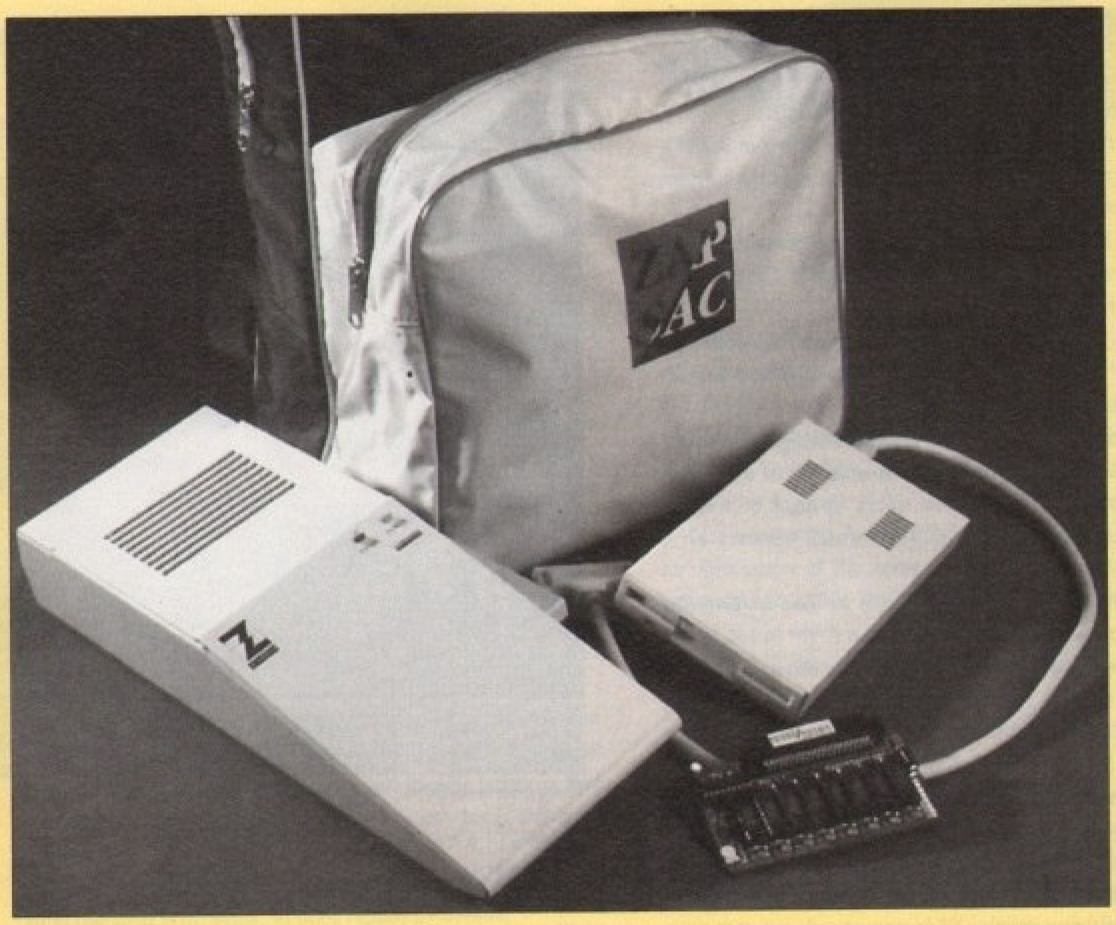
All in all I found the Floptical simple and effective in use and would certainly recommend you take a close look at it if you're in the market for more storage space.

When you consider you not only get a Floptical drive but a drive that will read all types of normal floppy disks directly into your Amiga, this starts to justify the price.

As I mentioned earlier, the Floptical is more expensive to buy initially but to expand it is far cheaper than any other device per Mb of storage.

With all this storage space on one disk you would be able to back up entire programs which take up several disks onto one Floptical disk and also back up hard drives without the need for hundreds of floppies.

You would be able to put an entire wordprocessor package and documents onto one disk saving you from disappearing under a mountain of floppies.



The Zappo hardware range

Technical specs

On the performance front the Floptical works far better than a standard floppy. In fact, a decent floppy transfers data at about 100k per second whereas the Floptical does it at around 200k per second with an access time of around 90ms.

Compared to an average hard drive the Floptical loses out a bit on the speed side of things with a transfer rate of between 600k and 1Mb per second and access time around 16 to 30ms.

It must be said that all of these figures depend on which SCSI controller you use, as speeds vary considerably from model to model.

As for future developments, Digital Micronics, the drive's manufacturers, plan to release either an 80Mb or 120Mb version very shortly.

Supplier: Power Computing
Phone: 0234 843388
Price: Internal – £289
External – £389

DTP

Professional Page 3.0

In its latest version, Gold Disk's Professional Page is an extremely powerful package offering both flexibility to the advanced user and ease of use to the beginner.

Its ARexx-based Genie functions make possible the automated design of pages and quick control of box and text effects, and its direct hot links to ProDraw 3.0, the Article Editor (a bundled text editor), and ProCalc give it an integrated power, albeit with mostly Gold Disk products.

Drawbacks include the program's sometimes less than intuitive keyboard short-cuts and its strict adherence to boxes, which can restrict design flexibility a little.

In addition, ProPage continues to rely exclusively on CompuGraphic fonts, despite the abundance of excellent Adobe Type I shareware fonts, and although Gold Disk have tried to address this problem with a font converter utility, the conversion process will not work with fonts which have PFM files, insisting instead on the AFM files found in official (and expensive) Adobe fonts.

These grumbles aside, ProPage 3.0 is a powerful top-end Amiga DTP package which always deserves long and thoughtful consideration before the user plumps for a package.

Supplier: Gordon Harwood
Phone: 0753 686000
Price: £129.95

PageStream 2.2

SoftLogik's ugly duckling has, over the last year, swanned its way to the top in the battle with ProPage due to several bug-fixing revisions and a totally new look and feel with v2.2.

In terms of features, little now remains to choose between the top packages, but in certain areas, PageStream has a definite edge.

User friendliness is the program's first advantage. Version 2.2 has been thoroughly designed with a Workbench 2.04 look and feel, leading to very intuitive keyboard controls – everything does what you'd expect it to do – and clean, simple requesters.

All this design, though not a big issue with prospective buyers, tends to really hit home once the package is used for any length of time. PageStream is also rather more flexible than its main rival in the range of fonts and artwork it will accept. Both CompuGraphic and Adobe Type I fonts are instantly usable, and the package has a font converter to enable the use of Apple Macintosh non-standard Adobe fonts.

When purchased with the Hotlinks Editions package, PageStream has instant Dynamic Data Exchange capabilities to match those offered by ProPage's ARexx Genies, with the added advantage that the system is open ended. Hotlinks has still to be taken on board by other major software houses, but if it does take off, PageStream's support for it will give the SoftLogik product a whole new dimension.

Supplier: Silica Systems
Phone: 081-309 1111
Price: £199

Software

Saxon Publisher 1.2

Saxon Publisher is a rather unique product in that it has a very different approach to the user than the other two main packages.

The interface is not based on Workbench 2.04 standards and doesn't have the standard easily recognised icons used by ProPage so it is initially a more difficult program to get into.

Saxon does, however, have a few unique tricks up its sleeves. It will, for instance enable the use of some very colourful gradiated fills, both on boxes and as text effects, and has superb irregular box control.

Unlike the other contenders, Saxon frames and boxes can be polygons of any number of sides and decidedly weird shaped text boxes are therefore possible.

This gives Saxon an edge when designing high impact one-off documents such as posters and flyers, but the package is not as suited to multi-page documents as the other big two.

Recommended for the colour fanatic and the user with advertisements or posters in mind, Saxon is probably best left alone when the user is considering magazine or newsletter design.

The screen refresh rate is a lot quicker than in either ProPage or PageStream, but Saxon insists on interlace mode, making a flicker fixer and multisync monitor compulsory purchases.

Supplier: Surface UK
Phone: 081-566 6677
Phone: £249.99

PageSetter 2

An old, non-PostScript, program for the amateur user, PageSetter 2 is restricted to simple documents and has few of the powerful features found on the high-end packages.

It is affordable and easy to use, but for anything other than low quality fanzines or the ubiquitous parish newsletter it is a DTP no-go.

PageSetter is best looked upon as a purchase for those wishing to dabble in DTP or who want better layout options than those offered by their wordprocessors. A good introduction to Amiga DTP but not a package with which to make your fortune.

Supplier: HB Marketing
Phone: 0753 686000
Price: £59.95

E M Computergraphic

The range of shareware PostScript fonts offered by EMC has expanded rapidly from a good selection of SoftLogik-style fonts exclusively for use within PageStream to a large collection of Type I and CompuGraphic fonts for use in all packages.

The quality of fonts can vary, but as each five disk selection costing only £12.50 can contain dozens of typefaces, there are usually plenty to suit all tastes.

Some exceptional general purpose fonts can be found among the usual one-off occasional fonts you'd use for one party invitation and never look at again, and when the minimum £60 asking fee for an official Adobe or CompuGraphic font is considered, it is well worth paying £12.50 for only one font you actually like.

In addition, the company stocks the Safari range of fonts, including the excellent Star Trek font collection, an absolute must for all Trekkies.

Supplier: E M Computergraphic
Phone: 0255 431389
Price: £12.50 per volume

George Thompson Services

The GTS range of fonts is not as wide as that offered by EMC, but the quality of what is on offer is every bit as good.

The 37 fonts available on the first GTS font pack, available in CompuGraphic or Adobe Type I format, can be used within all the major DTP packages, and contains a couple of useful standard fonts as well as the more whacky occasional typefaces.

What this adds up to is a package full of value, as any purchaser of fonts from GTS or EMC will find that most disks are packed with as many fonts as the companies could squeeze onto them. This is not usually guaranteed with shareware disks.

More font packs are on the way as the shareware fonts war heats up, so the next few months should be a good time for Amiga DTP users, especially if the quality of future releases matches what we've seen so far.

Supplier: George Thompson Services
Phone: 0707 664654
Price: £9.99

spotlight

Our monthly round-up of all that's worth having in Amiga software. This time it's the turn of DTP and music packages

Music packages

Bars and Pipes Professional

Bars and Pipes Pro (BBP) is easily the most modern and easy to use Amiga music package around. It's interface is designed to take the software hassles out of the music creation process and leave the composer to get on with the job at hand.

As the name of the package suggests, the BPP interface is controlled via bars and pipes which represent the channels going into and out of the sequencer through which all Midi data passes.

To alter the Midi data as it passes through, the user simply selects one of the tools available and drops it into the pipeline rather like adding an ingredient to a recipe.

Unlike most recipes, however, these ingredients can be shuffled around or dispensed with at the user's discretion, encouraging experimentation more than any other sequencer.

Under the colourful interface, BPP is a powerful sequencer with a full range of SMPTE options and system exclusive commands, so it is ideal both for the inexperienced composer looking for a "suck it and see" sequencer and the seasoned user alike.

Supplier: Zone Distribution
Phone: 081-766 6564
Price: £299

KCS Sequencer 3.5

One of the most powerful sequencers available on the Amiga, KCS (from Dr T's, one of the oldest music companies in the Amiga market) does just about everything, and in a very professional way.

The program is not ideal for the beginner, however, as both the software and the manual make assumptions about the user's knowledge of Midi and music in general.

The package has a modular approach which it calls the Multi Program Environment (MPE), including the Tiger software for graphical editing, the Automix mixing program, and Quickscore for generating traditional sheet music. On the ST side, over 30 such modules exist, though the package has enough to be getting on with, so we could see many more additions to MPE appear in the future.

Overall, KCS is ideal for the professional or very serious home Midi enthusiast as it packs in a vast array of powerful Midi features, but is not recommended for the beginner or occasional songster.

It could use some friendly front-end graphics, but apart from this there's very little that the package lacks.

Supplier: Zone Distribution
Phone: 081-766 6564
Price: £279
Requires 2Mb RAM

SuperJam!

SuperJam, from Blue Ribbon Soundworks (makers of Bars and Pipes) is the ultimate beginner's package because it is designed almost to write the music by itself.

In basic terms SuperJam! is a band-in-a-box continuing six built in musicians who can be told to play variations on certain chords in any style the user desires.

For instance, if requiring a blues number in C, G, and D, the user need only supply the chords and select a style from the style list, and the musicians toddle off on their own as the ultimate dedicated backing band.

To avoid repetition, each musician can play up to 16 variation in any one section of the song, which means there is a total of 16 million potential backing tunes. When the user is ready, he or she just jumps in with the selected instrument.

Not best looked upon as a full-blown sequencer, SuperJam! is great fun and handy for those in need of a little inspiration.

Supplier: Zone Distribution
Phone: 081-766 6564
Price: £99

Sequencer One Plus

The Gadjits sequencer is a fairly new product, and the Plus version a major revision, so it's not surprisingly it's one of the most modern, easy to use sequencers. Fortunately for Gadjits, Sequencer One Plus is also one of the most powerful.

The "Diamond Drag" editing system used in the package is probably the easiest graphical editing feature around, and gives the user total control over the finished sound.

Using it, the novice or seasoned user can simply drag a point on screen with the mouse to alter existing sounds or create new ones. There are plenty of powerful Midi features packed in under the surface as with the other modern glitzy sequencers, such as Midi system exclusive commands, very flexible Midi timing and pan/volume controls, and a track and cue sheet screen with 32 tracks.

Supplier: Gadjits Music Software
Phone: 061-236 2515
Price: £59.90

OctaMED v2

Having been spawned by a shareware program known and loved by thousands of Amiga musos, OctaMED should need little introduction.

It is an eight-channel sequencer with basic graphics and lots of powerful features given the price, and the first stop for anyone thinking of making a start in Midi.

OctaMED does everything a beginning muso could ask for. It supports Midi, can be used as sampling software with sampling hardware, there's a built-in sample editor, synth sounds can be created from scratch, and the finished tune can be viewed in something approaching standard notation.

Supplier: Amiganuts UK
Phone: 0703 785680 (fax)
Price: £20

Miracle Piano Tutor

Miracle is a hardware/software package based around a 49-key Midi keyboard and tuition software written by the Bars & Pipes people. Its aim is to teach complete beginners to learn piano to grade four standard, and it works a treat.

Concentrating on 40 chapters, each based around a song, there are hundreds of lessons on everything from the correct sitting and playing posture to chord changes, fingering techniques, and other advanced subjects.

The ultimate aim for every student is Handel's Water Music, the subject of lesson 40, and if this stage is reached the user will have saved hundreds of pounds on piano lessons.

Winner of an *Amiga Computing*'s Blue Chip Award, Miracle is one of the most exciting music products on the Amiga scene, at least for beginners if not for already knowledgeable musicians.

Supplier: Mindscape
Phone: 0444 872234
Price: £299

A-Z OF VFM

HARD TIMES

This month *The Market's* guide to hardware spotlights the ultimate in last minute Chrissie pressies, the replacement mouse...

sQuik

If you're not the sort who lives for a designer label, the curiously named sQuik is without doubt one of the best mixtures of performance and price available.

Unlike some of its glossy counterparts, the sQuik offers no mouse house, no mat, no nothin'... all you get is a world-beating 290dpi, blistering tracking speed and classic in Naksha-esque styling.

The only slight cause for complaint is the rather clunky buttons which are uncomfortably close to the feel – or lack of it – offered by the original Commodore offering.

If you're after silky smooth performance at a price anyone can afford, the sQuik is the perfect stocking filler.

Supplier: Trilogic
Phone: 0274 691115
Price: £14.95

Logitec Kidz

As the title suggests, this particular offering is aimed squarely at younger users. The wee beastie not only boasts a kiddie-friendly title but has been miniaturised to suit small sticky fingers.

The design is far and away the most mousy of mice with small blue buttons for ears which share the pear-shaped body with two tiny plastic eyes that follow a matching blue tail – alias connecting cable – as it snakes around the body.

For any little person this is the perfect Amiga peripheral. However, if like me you're stuck with hands like shovels it's next to useless.

With a dpi of just 200 and a shrunken ball we're not exactly talking accurate, but for children's applications it's fine.

Supplier: Logitech UK Ltd
Phone: 0753 537222
Price: £37.60

Itsa

In the best tradition of silly titles, next up we have the Itsa. Well what can I say? It's cheap, it's got buttons and that's about it.

Like the sQuik there are no additional bits and bobs which obviously help to account for a price which is only matched by the Contriver and beaten by the Alfa Data.

Bland is perhaps the best description for the Itsa. The dpi is average, the tracking is average and the overall look is that of a slightly podgy creature in a cheap plastic jacket.

Supplier: Meridian Distribution
Phone: 081-543 3500
Price: £12.99

Naksha

As anyone in the know will tell you, Naksha are famous for their quality rodents and excellent freebies. In keeping with tradition their present offering is – as usual – a splendid combination of sturdy design, impressive 280dpi resolution, silky smooth tracking and, erm, excellent freebies.

Along with the mouse itself you get a mouse house and more importantly the best mouse mat in the business. Take my advice, if you do invest in a Naksha, glue the mat to the desk immediately as they disappear faster than chicken tikka sandwiches at the Europress buttie van.

On top all that, Naksha also throw in Operation Stealth, a completely mouse-driven game that's received rave reviews in the mags. My only slight complaint concerns the rather boxy and less than ergonomic styling which isn't quite as comfortable as some.

Supplier: Logitech UK Ltd
Phone: 0753 537222
Price: £37.60

Alfa Data (Mega Mouse)

What can I say about Mega Mouse apart from "brilliant". In its basic form – minus a mat – this aptly named rodent is the cheapest of all and in my humble opinion the best.

Why such high praise? Well there are a number of reasons. First there's the 290dpi – a figure only matched by the sQuik. In addition, the tracking is second to none which when combined with the attractive ergonomic design makes it unbeatable.

If you're planning to shove a rodent down anyone's stocking this Christmas, you won't go far wrong with this one.

Supplier: Gasteiner
Phone: 081-365 1151
Price: £10.95 without mat
£14.95 with mat

Golden Image optical

If you bought the Madonna book or sat on the tube reading *Spy Catcher* before anyone else, this is the one you want. Look at me, I've got an optical, ner, ner, ni, ner, neeerr. In short a pseud's furless friend.

The accuracy falls well short of the cheapies and the connecting cable is pitifully short, making life for left-handers almost unbearable. The only high point is the low maintenance courtesy of the missing ball.

If the prospect of cleaning your ball and scrubbing your rollers fills you with dread, the optical is the answer. Apart from this slight glimmer of appeal there's not a lot else to say considering the almost laughable asking price.

Supplier: Ladbroke
Phone: 0772 203166
Price: £38.99

Contriver

Like the Itsa, the Contriver offering falls into the bland category. With a dpi of around 220 and reasonable tracking it's quite respectable but not the kind of performance you'll feel the urge to boast about in the boozer...

Again like the Itsa, the Contriver is a rather bulky and slightly cheap looking offering that's starting to show its age in the styling department.

Cheap and cheerful is the order of the day with a touch more elegance than most of the cheapies – and let's not forget your very own mouse house...

Supplier: Trilogic
Phone: 0274 691115
Price: £24.99

Logitec Pilot

Perhaps the strongest selling point for the Logitec is a touch of originality. As I'm sure you're aware, the vast majority of replacement rodents are almost carbon copies of their competitors, but not the Logitec.

Unlike all the other rodents mentioned, the Logitec offers an unusual design which features a smooth curve from front to back only interrupted by the two sizeable buttons towards the front of the unit.

Unlike some of the opposition, ergonomics are everything, which in turn produces an innovation in design. Alas there's no freebies on offer which makes the already hefty asking price even more difficult to bear.

If you're looking for the unusual with a respectable degree of performance, the Logitec is ideal. After a brief poll in the AC offices, it's obvious the Logitec comes down to a matter of taste, or arguably lack of it.

Supplier: Logitec UK Ltd
Phone: 0735 537222
Price: £32.31

Locator

Your at-a-glance guide to shopping through the pages of AC. All our advertisers, all their products, and all in an easy to find format. Your Amiga Market Locator makes finding that bargain infinitely easier.

AMIGAS | PRINTERS | PERIPHERALS | SOFTWARE | MISC

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Classifieds

• A500+ KCS Powerboard, manuals, Dos, boxed. As new £120. Phone 081 778 3214

◆ Amiga 1500 monitor, printer, £845 on 0962 824526 or 081 866 3717 weekends

◆ Amigabee BBS. Amateur Radio User Group. Beekeeping and Gardening Tel 24 hrs 081 695 5328

◆ International Amiga contacts interested in coding sought Gary, 29 Potgieter Road Edenvale 1610 South Africa

◆ Sleepy Town BBS 0234 267231 up to 2400 Bps

◆ Sell/swap HP51606A black cartridge (PaintXX) for Deskjet version. Brand new. Tel Darren 0233 634654

◆ Paintjet Colour Inkjet new unused paper etc. Offers 0423 528039

◆ Wanted Battle of the Gods Tel Mick on 0733 262621

◆ A320 Airbus played once £10 (061) 330 0766. Matthew. (Price inc. p & p)

◆ Amiga Action X 12 plus 20 coverdisks. Good condition. Offers phone Martin - Leicester 0533 703678

◆ Amiga contacts wanted to swap games 90 Homer Close, Gosport, Hants. Paul 0705 523750

◆ Amiga contacts wanted! Tsie, Sartlaan 32, 8400 Ostend, Belgium

◆ 1500, 52Mb Quantum, Philips 8833/11, BJ10e, + extras £900 071 231 5266 evenings.

◆ Amiga contacts wanted. 101% reply. Write to: Sadeq Bo-Olayan P.O. Box 15392 De'Eyah 35454 State of Kuwait

◆ Amiga 1500 £300. Microbotics accelerator £150 Tel. Kam 0785 215247

◆ Tabu seek contacts! Are you big enough. Write to Bacchus of Tabu, Lund N - 1621 Gressvik, Norway

◆ Elite pd swappers, swap with the best, :Scorpion, "Ardaven", Westra, Dinas Powys, Cardiff CF6 4HA

◆ Amiga back issues wanted. M. Mizzi 32 Our Lady of Sorrow Zejtun, Rep of Malta ZTN 02

◆ 'Zero' computer magazine, First 17 issues with binder £10 o.n.o. Tel: 051 546 7408

◆ A500 GVP 52 Meg 4Mb Phillips Monitor, loads of software including Wordworth. Tel 0706 877320. £850 only

◆ Amiga contacts wanted all over the world, send disk list.

◆ Superplan, Argasm, Populus/Simcity, Blood Money. Offers? Tel Steve 0734 786741

◆ A500 Plus, 1084 Commodore 1200 Printer etc. (0203) 212302, Mike

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Fill in the form on this page and send it to us with your payments (if applicable) – and remember to include your telephone number!

◆ A500 Cartoon Classics pack plus extra games. £270 ono. Tel London 081 392 1376 evenings

◆ DPaint III £15, Cando £30. Bonte Bart, Vrede Str. 3, 8310 Brugge, Belgium.

◆ Wanted Amiga Public Domain to swap, send lists to Michael Dransfield, Harlyn, Bridgwater Road, Sidcot, Winscombe, Avon BS25 1NB

◆ 68010P8 Amiga Accelerator. Boost the performance of your Amiga 500 by up to 50%. Fitting instructions supplied £39.95 + £1 p&p. Phone Illya 0483 235745

◆ A590 Hard Drive for A500. Boxed as new with instruction and installation software and power pack, with 2 Meg Ram fitted. £200. Phone 0622 745386 (Maidstone)

◆ Amiga contacts sought for swaps/buy/sell. Games list to 43 Chester Road, Ilford, Essex.

◆ A500 and B2000 with Hard Disks, Monitors, Hardware, Software. 0787 70064.

◆ KCS Powerboard for Amiga 500 MSDos 4.01 £130. 0403 273269.

◆ Wanted AMOS Programmers/Artists/Musicians. Sebastian Grinke, Northstoke, Bath BA1 9AT.

◆ Workbench 2, disks and manuals £15 plus p&p. 0235 848412.

◆ Amiga Games for sale, boxed, from £5. Phone Bristol 0275 851270.

◆ Yamaha PSS-680 Midi compatible Keyboard Adapter, manual, boxed. Ideal for Amigas. £100 ono. 065481 361.

◆ Sega Master System 2 Control Pads, 8 games, manuals, boxed, mint condition. Tel 068481 361.

◆ Amiga Software Photon Paint 2 £20, GFA Basic Interpreter £20, Future Mars Time Travellers £17. 065481 361.

◆ A500 for sale 1 meg, Kickstart 1.3 2.04 on disk, loadsa games, £159. Tel 071 581 8570.

◆ For Real-3D, GFX swapping, Teodor, Vassosu 14, N-8481 Bleik, Norway.

◆ Gamer-Link - The Pen Pal Club for Gamers, run by Gamers. Free swap service! SAE for full details to: 28 Churchfield, Ware, Herts SG12 OEP.

◆ Amiga software, all original, starting from £5. Tel 0708 866014 for details.

◆ Money! Interested! SAE M. Ward, 253 Humberston Ave. Humberston, Grimsby DN36 4JA.

◆ 1 - 50Mb Ram for A500 with Clock Fitt Trapdoor and to Gary £55. 081 508 7096.

◆ A1500, 49Mb HD, 3 meg, Hand Scanner, lots software, £810 ono. Phone 0793 764915.

◆ Power Scanner V2. B+W. Oval Interface, software etc. £75. Tel 08444 5769.

◆ Amiga 500+, 2 meg Ram + software £250 ono. Tel (0462) 684372.

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